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THE APPRECIATION
OF PAINTING



Photo. Anderson, Rome

National Gallery, London

PORTRAIT OF A MAN
Antonello da Messina.

Frontispiece

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE APPRECIATION OF PAINTING

By
PERCY MOORE TURNER

With Illustrations

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DEDICATED
WITHOUT PERMISSION
TO
ROBERT BAGGE SCOTT
WHO STARTED ME ON MY WAY

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PREFACE

THIS little book has been written with a two-fold object: first to suggest a method of developing latent artistic emotion in some of those who are really desirous of understanding what it is in a work of art which appeals to the initiated, and then to show how the various "schools" of painting may be most profitably approached. These two sections account for the greater part of the book, but they are preceded by another dealing shortly with various vital points; and appended to them is an epilogue in which something is said of some matters which by that time should have aroused interest.

I must take this opportunity of thanking my friend Mr. Egerton Beck for help in the revision of the manuscript and for suggestions which I have incorporated in the text.

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INTRODUCTION

I

MR. RUDYARD KIPLING says somewhere that there are probably not more than a hundred people in the world who really understand pictures ; which is, of course, a brilliant exaggeration. But exaggeration though it be, it suggests an indubitable truth : the number of those who can understand and appreciate any work of art is comparatively small and certainly very much smaller than it need be—the lack of appreciation being due in great measure to lack of training.

That there is a keen desire on the part of not a few to understand is clearly shown by the numbers who attend lectures given in public galleries. This is as evident in America as in England : the intelligent American really wants to get a grip of that mysterious something, the appeal of a work of art to a responsive soul, so difficult to explain in words when one is suddenly appealed to for information and help. But lectures are for the most

part not very helpful : they deal with the history of art, with technique, that is mechanical skill—with everything, in short, but the one thing needful, the development of the capacity to feel with the artist.

But, it will be urged, if lectures are devoted to matters not very helpful, there need be no difficulty in finding something more to the point : books abound. It is perfectly true that in recent years the output of books on every branch of art has been profuse : from the diminutive primer, professing to deal with the whole range of some extensive subject, to large and expensive volumes upon this “ master ” or that—sometimes it may be a craftsman who was only a master in the desire of his biographers—a “ master ” who, it may be, would have been better forgotten but for the exigencies of the subscription libraries. Many of these books resolve themselves into detailed descriptions of individual works of art, descriptions written in the peculiar jargon of the art critic ; the reader’s possession of the knowledge the authors profess to impart being all the while tacitly assumed. Most of them are “ pot-boilers,” absolutely useless, if not to every one, at any rate to the tyro. That there are books of real value need hardly be stated : but the greater number

of them are too advanced for one starting on the development of artistic emotional capacity.

The development of emotional capacity is the one thing necessary ; to attain it a strenuous and long-sustained effort is necessary, and this puts it beyond the reach of the general public. Even to those who are emotionally gifted above the average, development is a slow process ; insistent and unremitting exercise is necessary. But the reward is commensurate with the effort required, even if we are unable truthfully to say with Flaubert that the only means of avoiding unhappiness is to shut oneself up in art and to regard all else as nothing. And it must never be forgotten that there is a joy of contemplation no less than a joy of creation, a joy which presupposes understanding and responsiveness ; and that joy varies directly as the capacity for emotional receptiveness.

It seems paradoxical to say that it is at once easier and more difficult to appreciate artistic emotion expressed in pictorial or plastic form than in any other : but the statement is none the less true. The appreciation of such emotion is easier because the emotion is generally induced instantaneously ; on the other hand, it is more difficult since a higher development of the

emotional capacity is required to produce the requisite mental state. Compare, for instance, the immediate emotion produced upon a susceptible mind by a Corot with the effort required to appreciate fully a story by Dickens. The story has a number of subsidiary elements—character, description, dialogue—which are essential to the arousing of emotion and at the same time materially assist in the stimulation and conservation of the reader's interest; but such details are unnecessary to the picture's emotional appeal, which is more spontaneous and, as a consequence, immeasurably greater.

Once we are in possession of the faculty, emotional perception enables us to differentiate between vitally original art and that which is merely derivative: not always an easy problem. Every work of art, which forms part of the world's treasured possessions, was undoubtedly influenced, in a greater or a less degree, by the work of fore-runners or contemporaries. Frequently in the case of poorer craftsmen, the effect of this influence was mere imitation, but however skilfully it be concealed, imitation cannot co-exist with the spirit of art. Generally imitation is so obvious that it can be detected by the veriest novice: but sometimes not only an advanced state of percep-

tion but some knowledge of the history of art is required for its discovery. The works of Bermejo and a few others apart, the Spanish primitives, for example, were so influenced by contemporary Italian and Flemish art that practically they may be ranked as well nigh derivative. So, some of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century German painting is but little more than Flemish art adapted and modified. It shows few of the transcendent qualities which place the work of the van Eycks, of Memlinc, of Hugo van der Goes, of Dierick Bouts, of Roger van der Weyden in the front rank. But in justice to Germany it must be remembered that among the exceptions were such men as Dürer, Holbein and the Master of the St. Bartholomew altarpiece. Comparisons, however, must be made with great care and discrimination : it would, for instance, show a sad lack of the latter quality to suggest that Gainsborough's " Cornard Wood " is nothing but a second edition of Wynants and Ruisdael, that Crome only reflects Ruisdael and Hobbema, that Watteau and Delacroix are artistically unimportant because they owe so much to Rubens. There is no reason for objecting to the direct influence of another, so long as that influence does not predominate and exclude emotion per-

sonal to the artist influenced. But when an artist limits himself to the slavish repetition of what he has taken for his model, failing thereby to present the expression of any emotion of his own, he writes himself down a mere follower and his work is negligible.

As emotional capacity is developed, so should the powers of perception and discrimination increase. Works which formerly made no appeal will be appreciated and, on the other hand, faults of so glaring a character will probably be found in old favourites that no choice will be left but to strike them off our list of friends. This must be done ruthlessly to avoid the retarding of healthy artistic development: the discarded favourites have done their work in paving the way to greater things.

The exercise and development of the capacity for artistic emotion needs care and watchfulness. Many an enthusiast has been rendered emotionally impotent by too persistent application; though probably the majority of those so affected failed to recognize their condition on account of their absorption in history, archæology, or some other subject, important in itself, but quite irrelevant to the emotional comprehension of works of art.

To spend a whole day in a picture gallery is a mistake: one may certainly go on imbibing historical detail and so further one's knowledge of painters and their works, but emotion cannot be kept keyed up for a prolonged period. Gustave Flaubert put this very well when he said that "L'homme n'est fait pour goûter chaque jour que peu de nourriture, de couleurs, de sons, de sentiments, d'idées. Ce qui dépasse la mesure, le fatigue ou le grise; c'est l'idiotisme de l'ivrogne, c'est la folie de l'extatique."

As with most other things so with the development of emotional capacity, the chief difficulty is the beginning, and this is made even more difficult by the fact that the first steps must be seemingly retrograde; for under present conditions when one tries to get hold of the fundamental principles of art one discovers that there is almost as much to unlearn as there is to learn, to say nothing of the conditions of life in the twentieth century, want of repose, lack of time for contemplation, hustling and breathlessness, which so seriously interfere with the training of the power of appreciation. From earliest childhood most of us have been surrounded by objects pernicious in form, garish in colour, detestable in line and proportion: nursery books,

furniture, ornaments, the commonplace music-hall jingle, all have tended to warp and debase mind and judgement. The result is that we, civilized though we boast ourselves to be, are under greater disadvantages than the savage, whose art, naïve as it is, shows an unconscious comprehension of essentials.

Our aim should be to get back, as far as possible, to the standpoint of primitive peoples; to endeavour, that is, to be satisfied with the fundamental, ridding ourselves of the superfluous. This is difficult enough in itself; and the difficulty is not lessened in an age in which but few seem capable of grasping the simplest and most moving art; which to the rest is grotesque, childish, unworthy of serious thought. Much of the "art" of to-day is so complicated that it bears no relation to that of primitive peoples. But any one on the road to the æsthetic goal should soon appreciate the fact that, as compared with simple, complicated art is hollow and empty. Our upbringing however has made us more familiar with complicated art, so that generally to learn how to appreciate the greatest, which is all but invariably the simplest, we must begin with the most complex. It is by far easier to appreciate Landseer than to appreciate Giotto.

One would like to help on their way those who desire to attain this power of appreciation, but all that it seems possible to do is to indicate the method of study which has proved helpful to oneself. The result, whatever it may be, must depend upon the natural capacity of each one for emotion and the tenacity with which the development of that capacity is pursued. And all of one's tenacity of purpose is needed. A great connoisseur, Dr. Barnes, of Philadelphia, says: "Barring the few congenitally great æsthetes, it is more laborious to learn to recognize quality in a painting than to write a popular novel." But this excellent judge in more than one passage of his helpful paper ¹ lays bare his exultant joy in the possession of a new and strenuously acquired sense.

II

So far no attempt has been made to define or, at any rate, to explain the meaning of the term "art." If one notes the remarks of the general public at picture exhibitions, one finds that they are practically confined to the subjects treated; the fact that one picture is better

¹ "How to Judge a Painting," and *Arts and Decorations* for April, 1915

painted than another may call for a passing comment, but only because it enhances the observer's pleasure in the subject. But technique and subject are subsidiary matters: what then, it may be fairly asked, is art?

If we turn to Sir James Murray's *New English Dictionary* for guidance, we find that primarily art means "skill in doing anything as the result of knowledge and practice," then we get "the learning of the schools," "the application of skill to subjects of taste," as music and oratory, and then what more nearly concerns us, "the application of skill to the arts of imitation and design, painting, engraving, sculpture, architecture; the cultivation of these in its principles, practice and results; the skilful production of the beautiful invisible forms, and "this," he says, "is the most usual modern sense of *art* where used without any qualification. It does not occur in any English dictionary before 1880 and seems to have been chiefly used by painters and writers on painting until the present (i.e., nineteenth) century."

Art is further defined as meaning "anything wherein skill may be attained or displayed," whence we get the liberal arts, i.e., certain branches of learning; and again as "a pursuit or occupation in which skill is directed towards the gratifi-

cation or production of what is beautiful," specifically "the arts," among which the "fine arts"—those "in which the mind and imagination are chiefly concerned."

This is all very interesting and helps to clear our thought, but there is one meaning, the supreme meaning, of the term which has escaped the great lexicographer. By art in its supreme sense we mean that quality which differentiates Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne" from the soulless productions which year after year are in a majority on the walls of the exhibition rooms of the world's academies; that quality which enables the producer to, as it were, tear out a bit of the soul of nature and so present it as to excite every artistic emotion within us by an appeal which derives its cogency from its universality.

Compare the "Bacchus and Ariadne," Bellini's "Doge," Botticelli's "Spring" with purchases which have been made by the trustees of the Chantrey bequest; the smallest capacity for artistic emotion will be quite sufficient for the recognition of the vast inferiority of the modern productions; an inferiority due to the lack of that supreme quality which stirs our æsthetic emotions to a high degree of responsiveness.

The works of those endowed with this quality

become the criteria by which all others are judged ; and the quality itself, becoming as it were personified, is spoken of as Art. In the mind of a strict judge only such works as show this quality are regarded as " works of art " : the rest, the painted canvases of the many, bear the same relation to these as a copy of Greek verses by the average schoolboy bears to the poetry of Sophocles.

In all persons æsthetic emotion is present in some degree, though with the majority it remains latent. When it is abnormally developed it impels to creation, to conscious or subconscious endeavour to transmit or excite emotion, and then we have an artist.

An artist then is one, who by means of some instrument, such as a picture, transmits emotion to a responsive person, or, at least, evokes some æsthetic feeling in him, though the wish to transmit such emotion need not be present. And a work of art is the vehicle of this transmission.

It should be remembered that all great art is unconscious—one possessed of the faculty does not set out with the idea of creating a " work of art," he paints and the " work of art " comes of necessity. Great works, too, are always produced with great economy of means ; the artist seeks to perpetuate his inspiration by the simplest

and most direct means at his command, for the simple reason that, as Mr. Arnold Bennett aptly points out in another connexion, "the most difficult thing in all art is to maintain the imaginative tension unslackened throughout a considerable period." Hence the frequent superiority of an artist's first idea, expressed either in a drawing or a sketch, over the laboured and finished picture.

Another point worthy of mention is this: the creation of great works of art has not seldom been accompanied by great suffering. Jean François Millet stated this quite plainly: "L'art n'est une partie de plaisir. C'est un combat, un engrenage qui broie. Je ne suis pas un philosophe. Je ne veux pas supprimer la douleur, ni trouver une formule qui me rendra stoïque et indifférent. La douleur est, peut-être, ce qui fait le plus fortement exprimer les artistes."¹ And Gustave Flaubert said much the same in regard to his writing. A sense of this fact should, it may be said, lead one to look upon a great work of art in a spirit of reverence, a due recognition of the effort and pain by which it was called into being.

The finest works of art can never be popular. It may, from a social point of view, be praise-

¹ "*La Vie et l'Œuvre*" de J. F. Millet, par Alfred Sensier, p. 100.

worthy to have exhibitions in Whitechapel and Limehouse ; but the multitude can never really appreciate the finer manifestations of the soul. Popular art, even the best of its kind, owes its popularity to the fact that it deals with something apparent to the man in the street : art, however sublime, which goes beyond the apparent can never be popular. There is no reason, however, why the circle of appreciators should be so restricted as at present. A revision of teaching methods, from both the creative and appreciative sides, can do much towards evoking a better attitude in the rising generation. And it is only fair to add, if the appreciation of great art is the privilege of the few, the majority of its producers have come from the masses.

* * * * *

A word of warning must now be given in regard to certain points which, not infrequently, are stumbling-blocks : and, first of all, let us take the question of *technique*, the mechanical skill required for the production of a work of art. After what has been said, it is hardly necessary to add that technique by itself does not count for much : art begins where technique ends. Crowds can be taught to draw and paint in a more or less creditable manner ; but the number of those who can

express anything worth expressing is small indeed. Great technical achievement may be present in a work utterly incapable of exciting the slightest emotion : from the point of view of technique, some of the greatest and most moving works seem to us, on the other hand, to leave much to be desired. But technique is the chief desideratum in those comfortable studios in St. John's Wood and the Parc Monceau which have produced so little worthy to be classed as great art. Modern exhibitions are full of pictures, technically brilliant but destitute of the essentials of art. They are nearly all products of academic teaching ; and it is a lamentable thing that some of the producers of these " works of art " should be allowed to acquire official positions which enable them, in a measure, to be arbiters of taste, and to reserve to themselves the right of refusing, so far as they can, even a hearing to all art which does not commend itself to their own narrow and cramped ideas.

Official art is everywhere dominated in this way ; and what this means may be seen in the official galleries devoted to modern art in all countries ! The public, incapable of judging for itself, assumes that those who are responsible are qualified to judge and therefore accepts all they offer as real works of art, the result being a continuous and

general perversion of taste. And the mischief done does not end with this perversion : originality and the power of initiative are stifled. As one of Mr. Kipling's characters puts it : " Give 'em what they know and when you have done it once do it again." Even in regard to the technique which they worship, they are out of date. They accept the principles which their now immediate predecessors regarded as revolutionary, but their attitude towards their own contemporaries is identical with that of their predecessors. The case of the Caillebote collection furnishes an apt illustration of the official attitude. M. Caillebote left his fine collection of impressionist paintings to the French nation, subject to the condition that it should not be broken up. The professors of the École des Beaux Arts were up in arms. Gêrome at their head, they proclaimed that they could not continue to teach an art of which they believed they knew the laws, if the State admitted works, the very negation of what they taught, into galleries where they could be seen by their pupils. They *were* admitted, and the professors did *not* resign their posts ! But they did succeed in preventing the impressionists having fair play : for the pictures were hung in a gallery quite inadequate in regard to light and space. Official

hampering of art in France was at last so deeply resented by artists of worth and originality that they left the Salon to the crowd. They first established other salons which, like the original one, were subject to a jury, a condition dangerous to originality of expression; then, hardly less dissatisfied, they founded for themselves the Salon des Indépendants, where no jury reigns; in it available wall space is, subject to the payment of a small fee, at the disposal of any one.

There are, however, two good points in official recognition of art. One, that the public are made to realize that art, by the powers that be, is considered of vital import to a nation. The other, that the existence of official academies provides original creative genius, which is almost invariably outside its walls, with a firmly rooted conservative institution against which to fight. But for this, its struggle for recognition would be far more severe. State recognition of art is alone justified when employed in the creating and developing of museums and galleries wherein the finest examples of our own and past ages are displayed for the education of the public.

It cannot be too strongly impressed that great creative art is hardly possible without struggle and privation. Great art has almost invariably

come into being by the expenditure of intense suffering and tears.

The path of a true artist is never easy : the false standard set by the academies through their professors makes it even less so. Those who have something vital to say usually work on original lines, employing means peculiar to themselves, not from any spirit of eccentricity but from a conviction that those means are not only the most suitable but the only ones by which their emotions can be expressed. Impediments are placed in their way. Academies, for the most part, are a generation behind their time : they appropriate and teach the technical means advocated by reformers of the previous generation, but probably altogether miss what those reformers achieved with their technique. This is what happened with the impressionists : fiercely opposed by the academicians of the time ; to-day painting as taught in the academies is largely based upon their principles.

Care must also be taken to avoid confusion of " art " with " subject." That a picture tells a story and tells it well does not by any means ensure its being a work of art ; subject is only one of the means for attaining the end, though during the latter half of the eighteenth and the whole of

the nineteenth century it largely usurped the place of art. A "catchy" title improves considerably the chance of selling a picture and so has a distinct commercial value; and it often creates the popularity, as in the case of Landseer's "Uncle Tom and his Wife for Sale."

Passing to the opposite extreme during the last few years there has been a tendency to affect to dispense with subject; this, of course, is mere affectation, for the most subjectless picture ever produced had for its theme some subject.

The degree to which subject may be employed is a matter for the artist's discretion. As has been already pointed out, the greater the work the greater will be the economy of means employed in its production: superfluties lessen the capacity to evoke emotion—the majority of eighteenth century English painters, for example, were too lavish in the employment of anecdotal accessories. But in this matter, every picture must be judged on its own merits; it is impossible to lay down general rules. Due weight must always be given to the idea of the artist when this is apparent; nor must it be overlooked that these accessories may in themselves possess emotional though frequently subsidiary qualities, so that their

inclusion may, in spite of diminished concentration of presentation, be justified.

In this connexion it will be noticed that for long it was considered essential in landscape painting to introduce figures, which were used to accentuate effect and thereby, it was believed, to enhance the value of the composition. Cezanne and his followers have clearly shown that such details are generally unnecessary and may be detrimental to the desired concentrated presentation. When an artist does consider them helpful, they should always be endowed with emotional qualities of their own. What has been said of the introduction of unnecessary detail into landscape is equally true in regard to portraits and subject pictures. An excellent example is afforded by the well-known portrait of Georg Gisze by Holbein,¹ now hanging in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. Here the wealth of accessory detail has a certain emotional value ; the representation of each separate object is a work of art and for emotional quality may be compared with the actual portrait ; but that the picture would have gained emotionally by the suppression of these accessories will probably be conceded by any one who has compared it with Antonello da Mes-

¹ See Plate 1.



Photo. Hanfstaengl.

Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

PORTRAIT OF GEORGE GISZE

Hans Holbein the Younger.

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sina's portrait of himself¹ in the National Gallery.

Not unconnected with this is the question of sentimentality in art. Sentiment in art has been defined as the "moving quality resulting from the artist's sympathetic insight into what is described or depicted"; the quality, that is, which by means of artistic representation calls into being a series of sensations culminating in æsthetic emotion. By sentimentality, on the other hand, I mean the abuse of the means used for producing this æsthetic emotion, forcing them by exaggeration beyond what is necessary for its production. This induces irrelevant emotions which deprive those subject to them of the power of bringing real æsthetic emotion into play. The human brain is only capable of one undiluted emotion at a time; and if it is occupied with pity, love, hate and the rest, it is incapable, at the same moment, of all-engrossing æsthetic emotion. In moderation, these other emotions may conduce to the æsthetic, and, indeed, may even be needed to bring it into action; but once æsthetic emotion has been aroused the function of the others is determined. Up to that point, other emotions were legitimate; beyond it, they conduce to mere sentimentality. A typical instance of what is

¹ See Frontispiece.

meant may be found in a picture known as "The Last Day in the old Home," by the Pre-Raphaelite Robert B. Martineau, now in the Tate Gallery. The factors upon which the painter has relied for exciting the emotion he desired are the pathetic condition of a family doomed by a reverse of fortune to quit its ancestral home, the assumed bravado of the head of the family, drinking a farewell toast to the portrait of his ancestor, already ticketed for the sale; the resignation of his mother, then carrying out her last duties as lady of the house; the old steward well-nigh breaking down as he pays off the aged housekeeper; the callous behaviour of the auctioneer's men affixing the lot numbers. Now, what emotions are provoked by this mass of studied detail? We have pity for the lady, her two sons, the steward, the housekeeper; and disgust with the auctioneer's men. That it is ill-drawn, commonplace in colour, wanting in concentration would not signify if it were artistically satisfying, if it were capable of arousing artistic emotion; but the only emotions excited are those of pity and disgust. In a word, it is a specimen of the merest sentimentality.

Quite other than this is the "Nativity" by

¹ See Plate 2.



Photo. Mansell.

Tate Gallery, London

THE LAST DAY IN THE OLD HOME
Robert Braithwaite Martineau.

Piero della Francesca in the National Gallery.¹ Here we have a child as the central object, the mother, and a choir of angels making music ; the means employed to excite our emotions are simple, but they set those emotions vibrating to an extraordinary degree. The facts that the child is the Son of God, that the mother's love is mingled with reverential awe, that the singing chorus proclaims in joyous rapture the coming of the Saviour of the world, from the æsthetic point of view are quite subsidiary. There is no sentimentality here : though the picture is full of sentiment.

Is beauty indispensable to a work of art ? A Greek would probably have answered in the affirmative ; with him beauty was inseparable from anything of real worth. But the manifestation of beauty certainly is not the end of art, nor is beauty itself indispensable in a work of art. As Sir Charles Walston well puts it, " the abnormal, even the diseased, may well be introduced into art if it dissolves itself into a higher normality, the harmonious expression of some greater idea " ;² to appreciate the truth of this it is only necessary to recall the treatment of certain subjects in reli-

¹ See Plate 3.

Greek Sculpture and Modern Art, p. 35.

gious art. He suggests the substitution of "harmony" for "beauty" as the essence of art: "If you think it misleading to use the term beauty . . . let me then say, as practically Aristotle did, that harmony is and ever will remain the essence of art, its primary impulse, and its ultimate purpose"; and harmony in this sense primarily means the satisfaction of man's sense of form."¹ With beauty or harmony, whichever term may be preferred, must always be found that correlation of parts which is known as rhythm; but all said and done "beauty" is only a relative term.

Another point for consideration is the relation between art and morality; but that is more suitable for a treatise on ethics. It must suffice here to say quite definitely that it is not function of art to teach morals—for this there are more suitable organs. Closely allied with this question, however, is another on which a word must be said. Many hold that the crucial test of a work of art is its "conveying a message" or the reverse; and this has been advocated by such competent exponents, from the literary point of view, that it has made no small headway. These writers have been more or less inclined to accept

¹ *Greek Sculpture and Modern Art*, p. 40.



Photo. National Gallery, London.

National Gallery, London

THE NATIVITY
Piero Della Francesca.

as good art any work which inspired noble and virtuous feelings, for which reason Ruskin lauded the banalities of Holman Hunt. It is unnecessary to do more than state the fact ; the fallacy is obvious.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I

THE business before us is the development of the emotions, and a start may be made with either landscape or portraits. Subject painting is less easy of approach from the purely æsthetic point of view and indeed it has been contended that it can only be properly approached by those who possess certain literary qualifications, but this is not true. That we happen to know the story of Bacchus and Adriadne may increase our interest in Titian's picture, but it cannot increase its emotional appeal: our knowledge might indeed be a distraction and so diminish the force of the appeal—for instance, it might suggest a mental comparison between the Ariadne of the picture and the Ariadne of our own conception. Titian's work is not a masterpiece because it faithfully represents an episode in the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, but for the reason that he by a masterly employment of form and colour, of line and composition, has produced a work

which infects the responsive spectator with emotion.

A basis of comprehension once established (whether by the study of landscape or portrait painting is a matter of indifference), the whole domain of art lies within the student's grasp : his future development depends on his own will and his emotional capacity. But it may be well to point out that the means taken for the development of the emotional capacity for painting need not be confined to the study of pictures or even plastic art : music and poetry are particularly helpful, developing as they do the emotions in other directions and so increasing their responsiveness. This was pointed out some years since by a French painter to a student of painting who happened to be a violinist, the painter assuring him that his musical gift, that is the sense of rhythm, was a great asset in either the creation or comprehension of a work of art ; the Japanese, too, express the same idea when they say that a picture is a poem without words, a poem a picture without form.

A choice of means having to be made, let us take landscape painting ; that a similar system can be applied to portraits will be shown later on. And by landscape painting, for our present pur-

pose, is meant painting in which landscape is the direct object and not merely an accessory.

How to approach a landscape painting was so well laid down in the preface to an exhibition catalogue of pictures of the Norwich school that nothing better could be done by way of beginning than to set out the passage here. It ran as follows :

"It is evident that you cannot see more in a picture than you bring to it. Your judgment of a work of art must bear an exact ratio to the sum of your knowledge of nature and art. It is equally evident that to judge a picture fairly it is necessary to have this knowledge, to eliminate, as far as you can, your bias in favour of any particular method or style, and to try to discover the standpoint and aims of the painter. The mere love of looking at pictures, or the reading of handbooks, will not make you a judge, any more than being the owner of a fine collection will enable you to understand their beauties ; but if you are sincere, always busy observing nature and studying art side by side, you will feel some day, in turning the corner of a quiet country lane, the first workings of an indefinable sensation of pleasure, the pleasure we should all experience in the possession of a new sense. The scene before you appeals to you in enchanting qualities of light and colour, in subtlest form ; it is no more a mere country lane. For the first time you begin to see and are able to judge in a little way the truth of an old Crome, even under the accumulation of varnish and dirt obscuring it. You have laid the foundations of an intelligent and discriminating judgment, you are cultivating and improving your natural taste (if you have any) into good taste, and good

taste is a matter of cultivation. You may have been born with the faculty of taste in greater proportion than others, but this of itself will not enable you without tedious study to understand that the very expression of good taste implies a generalized standard by which to judge its goodness or badness. A standard does not mean, though, that you judge a picture by the amount of its resemblance to other pictures, or to your own favourite artist and to his method; but it does mean this: that it is composed of many styles and methods, each having some special beauty, and all uniting at last in the forming of a standard of good art and good taste."

And here I shall venture to indulge in personal reminiscences. I was taken to this exhibition as a boy, and these words sank deep into my mind. Living in Norfolk, I at once set about the carrying out of these suggestions, and before long appreciated the thoroughness with which Crome had portrayed the soul of his native county—the peculiar blue of the Norfolk sky, the characteristic form of the oak (its predominating tree), the mystic charm of its pastoral scenery. I began to see with his eyes and was awakened to beauties of which I had never before dreamt; a simple country scene that hitherto had passed unnoticed now presented many and unfathomable delights. I seemed to be and was in the possession of a new sense: I had taken the first and by far the most difficult step towards a state which for long has



Victoria and Albert Museum

ON THE SKIRTS OF THE FOREST

John Crome.

been so much a part of my life that there are moments when I am tempted to think that life itself would be insupportable without it. I have mentioned this personal experience as an encouragement to others ; those who are anxious to understand what the art-lover sees in a work of art and have despaired of ever doing so. It may be objected that I was particularly fortunate in the circumstance of living in the Norfolk of Crome, so unattainable to the Londoner. The obvious reply is that he has Hampstead and Constable.

II

Some may, perhaps, think that an intense study and love of nature is all that is needed for the appreciation of landscape painting : nothing, however, could be further from the mark. There are many who delight in the study of nature, who revel in a country walk, who are in raptures at the sight of growing corn, who lie at full length on the ground enthralled by the observation of life in the stagnant pond, who yet are absolutely innocent of any artistic emotion. For appreciation of nature does not necessarily imply appreciation of it as interpreted by art, though as a general

rule it may be said that appreciation of nature so interpreted induces a greater love of nature in itself. There are others who are solely impressed by nature's utilitarian side. I remember once going for a country walk with a highly intelligent Swede, a passionate student of music and a man with a very fine literary taste. We came across a splendid stretch of country, a prominent feature in the landscape being a majestic elm. To my almost involuntary exclamation of pleasure at the sight of this noble tree, my companion simply remarked that he saw no good in it ; it would not repay the trouble of cutting down on account of its age and certain malformations ! He looked at the tree from the point of view of his father, a timber merchant, and in the same way others would only think in looking at a splendid field of wheat of the probable amount of its yield. This spirit obviously has no sympathy with the æsthetic side of nature. Artistic pleasure must be excited by the natural object itself, its form and colour, and though the response to its appeal does not necessarily depend on the capacity for looking at nature through art, this undoubtedly is a powerful stimulant : that is, the power of sympathizing with what some great artist has felt in regard to some landscape a portion of whose

kernel, so to speak, he has extracted and placed on his canvas.

Search must be made for an artist who arouses one's sympathy and, when found, the effort must be made to fathom his emotional attitude. And here it is of paramount importance that the student should be sincere. He must be utterly indifferent to the opinion held by the world at large in regard to the painter he has pitched upon. The one and only essential is to make a start. Should the work of the chosen artist, emotionally considered, be poverty itself, it is at this stage a matter of no great consequence ; its poverty will be recognized as progress is made, and when the time comes to cast this particular artist aside, it will be done with the consideration due to one who has served as a stepping-stone to higher things. In my own case I was fortunate : Crome was my choice, and as the years have rolled by my regard for him has steadily increased. But Patrick Nasmyth or Birket Foster might conceivably be more useful to another : so for that matter might one of the painters favoured by the trustees of the Chantrey bequest. Whoever he may be, steady work is a necessity. Ceaseless comparison with other good men working on similar lines. For the purpose of this systematic comparison a

public gallery is obviously of great value when the collection is a good one : but the student who has to depend on the average municipal gallery must be on his guard ; for these galleries are often enough collections of worthless productions which, to say the least, can do nothing to further the progress of the student.

III

Given the gallery, the first thing to be done is to select the works of some other man who worked on similar lines with the painter who has been chosen for study. Then compare the work of the latter with nature, if possible with the particular country he chose for his studies. Make these comparisons incessantly, constantly striving to get behind the mere representation of concrete objects and to penetrate his purpose ; in other words, to get at the soul of the country as seen by the painter. A painter who specializes in some particular stretch of country has generally grasped its character more thoroughly than another who has been more promiscuous in his choice of subject. Next make a similar comparison between the works of the second painter and nature, which will be all the more profitable if both painters worked on

the same ground. This done, carefully compare the works of the two painters and select the one who makes the greater æsthetic appeal. The process must then be repeated between the chosen of these two and a third.

To take a concrete example, suppose that Crome be chosen in the first instance and that the student can visit Norfolk ; he might select Stark as his second artist. Comparison and study will show that Crome had an intense appreciation of his native county, that he had felt and expressed the vitals of structure, formation, light ; in a word, that he had gripped and shown the spirit of Norfolk. At a very early stage in the process of comparison the relative barrenness of Stark will be evident ; it will be seen that what merit there is in his work is largely due to Crome, that his technique is derivative, and that the emotion he expresses is the emotion of a lesser Crome. Stark will be recognized as a conscientious and striving though limited artist, but will be rejected as unworthy of comparison with his master. Vincent might be tried next, and the result will be the same ; though it will probably be thought that Vincent was superior to Stark.

The next thing will be to study the artists from whom Crome acquired his first impulse—

Wilson, Ruisdael, Hobbema, Wynants. As regards Ruisdael, the student will find that he is in the presence of a great poetical temperament, and if he is able to pay a prolonged visit to the neighbourhood of Haarlem his esteem for this master will develop considerably. There is so much in common between the English landscape painters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the Dutch of the seventeenth, that it would be advisable at this stage to deal with the works of Hobbema, Van de Velde and Cuyp in the manner suggested for those of the English painters: if a visit can be paid to the principal Dutch galleries, so much the better, not only for the sake of the works themselves but also for the opportunity afforded of seeing the country and making acquaintance with the local atmosphere.

With study the appreciation of Cuyp will grow, and the superiority of Hobbema to Adrian Van de Velde will not take long to assert itself: the way will thus be paved for Jan van Goyen, Salomon Ruisdael and Jacob Ruisdael. The last named will probably soon take the chief place, and no attention should be paid to the current tendency to underrate this great artist. He has, it is true, left many things which are emotionally poor; his waterfalls and other works done to

earn his bread by the gratification of popular taste. But the man who was capable of the "View of Haarlem," in the Mauritshuis at the Hague, of "The Cornfield," in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam, of the "Windmill," at Amsterdam, and the "View over an extended Wooded Country" in the National Gallery, will ever be keenly appreciated by all capable of understanding the great in art. Constable throughout his life was full of enthusiasm for Ruisdael; Turner, no less enthusiastic, named an important picture after him; to him Gainsborough and Crome were not a little indebted for their development; and the study of his works will reveal how much Hobbema owed to him.

Attention may now be turned to the later Flemish school: here Rubens stands out like a giant, though the student would be gifted with extraordinary powers of perception if he could, at this stage, rightly appreciate his talent as a landscape painter. Later, when he has some idea of the landscape painting of other countries, he will be able to estimate the value of such achievements as the "Château de Steen"¹ and its companion in the National Gallery, the hunting

¹ See Plate 4.

scenes in the galleries of Brussels and Madrid, and the rainbow landscapes in the Wallace collection, and at Munich. But on the whole the Flemish school is less rich than the Dutch in landscape painters ; they are, it is true, numerous, but their works, with the exception of such men as Siebrechts and a few others, are frequently rather of historical and national, than of vital and universal importance.

To come back to the English painters. It has already been said that Crome and Gainsborough were deeply indebted to Jacob Ruisdael, and suggested that Constable and Turner, too, were influenced by the Dutch landscape painters : now, by comparing their landscapes, we can see how largely Rubens supplemented the Dutchmen in the education of Gainsborough.

The new phase in this painter's work manifested itself whilst he was working at Bath. His landscapes became more romantic ; he discarded topographical detail ; the scheme was no longer based upon some particular place ; his trees no longer presented the individual marks of the oak and the willow, they had become simply trees, conventionalized to take their part in a poetical presentation ; there is a fervent and unconscious striving for limpidity and ethereal

effect ; the whole composition breathes spontaneity. This can be seen in " The Market Cart " and " The Watering Place "—both in the National Gallery, and to an even greater extent it is evident in his drawings. But there is no intention of suggesting that a comparison of these later works with " Cornard Wood " and the " View of Dedham " would be disadvantageous to the earlier paintings. " Cornard Wood " and " Dedham " are two of the most moving landscapes of the English school.

IV

Attention should now be turned to the Italian landscape painters—never ceasing to make comparisons. Towards the end of the seventeenth century Salvator Rosa was at work : his life was a turbulent one, and this finds its reflection in the subjects he treated, wild savage scenes peopled with bandits, powerfully represented, with the power which comes from knowledge. The works of this interesting artist are vigorously painted, and acquaintance with them is desirable for a real understanding of the development of landscape painting. His works were generally pitched in a dark key, and time has darkened many of them.

This is one of the reasons for his unpopularity with the present generation ; very different from the vogue which his works enjoyed in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth. Then English collectors were particularly partial to him, which accounts for the fact that many of his finest works are to be found in English private collections.

The Italian painters profoundly influenced the French : it is but necessary to name Nicholas Poussin, whose merits have only in these last years been fully recognized, though many of the best modern painters owe not a little to him. Poussin is, in every respect, one of the greatest painters France has produced : his virile individuality rendered him proof against the undue domination of the potent and, to a lesser man, well-nigh irresistible influence surrounding him during his long sojourn in Italy. Much as he learnt from the works of the great artists of the Italian renaissance, and more particularly from those of Titian, he was always able to adapt those lessons to his own personal needs and to escape being in any sense a plagiarist. Seldom indeed has any painter so happily mingled passionate appeal with restraint ; whilst his composition, his drawing, the disposal of his figures, the sense of movement and

rhythm, are evidence enough of an artistic temperament of the first order. At first sight he may seem austere and cold, but with a more intimate acquaintance this austerity will reveal itself as the restraint with which a passionate temperament understood how to make its appeal the more forcible and subtle.

With Poussin must be associated his gifted brother-in-law, Gaspard Dughet, commonly called Gaspard Poussin, who must be given a high place among the seventeenth-century French landscape painters; his Italian landscapes are remarkable for dignity, sincerity and breadth of handling. He produced a large number of works, some of the finest of which, like those of Salvator Rosa, are to be found in England. Gaspard Poussin was the connecting link between his brother-in-law Nicholas and the Lorrainer Claude Gellée, commonly known as Claude Lorrain, one of the most illustrious landscape painters of all time. It would indeed be difficult to estimate what subsequent landscape painting owes to Claude; in the treatment of light he has never been surpassed.

V

From the beginning of the nineteenth century landscape painting has taken a very important place: the general course of its history will be indicated here—it being always understood that the method of comparison must be unremittingly practised. We have seen how great an impetus was given by Wynants, Ruisdael, Rubens and Claude, but influence lay dormant during the greater part of the eighteenth century: and until the rise of four English landscape painters, Wilson, Crome, Gainsborough and Constable, it might well have been thought that landscape painting had passed away.

Wilson, founded upon Claude, combined an intense and very English temperament with a keen sense of aerial effect and gained a brilliant if somewhat limited success. He has never been a popular painter, why, it would be hard to say; his influence was chiefly felt by his contemporaries in painting. Crome, then quite young, was one of those most affected, but he, as we have seen, was largely founded upon Hobbema and Ruisdael. Gainsborough began by following the Dutchman's precepts and ended by coming powerfully under Rubens' influence. No one of these three great

men, however, wielded the same power for good or evil as John Constable : a great painter, who may be said to have given the first impetus to that French school which was one of the remarkable features of the nineteenth century.

Constable, like Crome, started with an intense admiration of Ruisdael ; he felt the directness, the poetry, the truth of his appeal. His early pictures show as great a feeling for detail as Ruisdael ever showed. But when he felt his power, he suppressed what, to him, was useless detail and endeavoured to give an enhanced effect with a minimum of effort. Here was, indeed, an advance : it was a practical example of the wisdom of economy of means. The idea of his later manner may have been suggested to him by Rubens, for there is a strong affinity between their outlooks and their methods of consummation.

Constable was right in maintaining that there was room for a natural painter and in his determination to be that painter. One has but to read his letters to see how passionate a lover of Nature he was and how earnest in his endeavour to portray her. His innovations were not unnaturally received by the old school with hostility. The day of the brown tree was to pass for ever : Constable was to paint Nature as he found and

loved her, the countryside of England, in sunshine and shade, but always full of light. His whole art was a revolt against applying to Nature a system of composition and portrayal which was untrue and foreign to the scenes he painted. His genius is best revealed in his spontaneous sketches in oil, in his drawings and some of his water-colours. In his more finished pictures, he frequently lacks unity, there is a lack of directness, a conscientious application to detail which betrays an uninspired but painstaking craftsman over-anxious to attain completeness. Constable was a typical instance of the supreme artist who cannot sustain for long the emotional state vital to the production of supreme work and who, consequently, has to go to work, upon the quickest and most direct lines, whilst it is upon him.

Compare the "Hay Wain" or the "Flatford Mill" of the National Gallery with the wonderful sketches in the same gallery, the Victoria and Albert and the Diploma Gallery. Although Constable wore down opposition to a great extent, his principles do not seem to have taken a hold of his English contemporaries; we look in vain for any trait in their work that can be confidently assigned to his influence.

It was reserved for the French to put his precepts

into practice. In 1824, three of his pictures were bought by a speculator at the Royal Academy and sent to the Paris Salon. They produced an immediate impression upon the French painters, who felt that a new note in landscape had been struck, for the freshness and directness of presentment seen in them were something till then unknown in Art, and it was realized that they showed a way of escape from the conventional landscape. A small company who worked on these lines gradually began to be known by the rather misleading name of the Barbizon school, so-called from the fact that some of them worked in the village of that name in the forest of Fontainebleau; a more correct style would be the "School of 1830," for some important members, Daubigny and Corot, for instance, rarely or never worked at Barbizon. It was an enthusiastic and hard-working body of men, larger in numbers than most people realize; for the minor members have been forgotten or their works given to other men.

Corot is one of the best known of the group. His early works are remarkable for their spontaneity and sincerity of feeling; a love of light and atmosphere, of poetry, of form, whether it be of trees or figures, was an obsession with him. Corot developed under the influence of Claude,

of whom he was the great successor. As with Constable, so with Corot, the innovation was not appreciated at first ; he had to endure years of poverty. Recognition came at last and with it a demand for repetition, to which unfortunately he gave way ; so that his later work is rarely, if ever, of the same artistic value as his earlier paintings. Corot takes a very high place, not only for his landscapes, but as a figure and portrait painter ; some of his figures, indeed, are not unworthy of comparison with those of Jan Vermeer of Delft.

Of far less ability was Troyon. He received very little real instruction, but came under the influence of Camille Roqueplan, by which he benefited. His subjects are nearly all taken from the simple life of the fields, generally with oxen or sheep, in the painting of which he greatly delighted. His pictures are full of light and show much truth to nature ; they are, however, not infrequently awkward in composition, and lacking in concentration, giving one the impression of an endeavour to convey more than they actually succeed in doing.

Though unequal in his work, Daubigny is more important than Troyon ; occasionally, as in the fine series in the Mesdag Museum at the

Hague, he shows himself to be one of the most remarkable landscape painters of modern France, manifesting the soul of the French countryside, and particularly that of the Isle de France, as few other painters have done.

It is, however, with Millet, Rousseau and Diaz that the name of Barbizon is rightly associated. There they lived, working in the forest, troubled by the never-ending difficulty of selling their pictures. But of one of them, Diaz de la Peña, it must be said that but little would have been heard if he had not been associated with men of the importance of Millet and Rousseau. A few of his landscapes are good, but usually they are meretriciously pretty and do not give one the impression of deep feeling.

Rousseau was possessed of greater talent; enthusiastic and impetuous, generous and devoted, his art reflects his character. In his best work there is a fire and passionate interpretation of nature which has secured him an important place among landscape painters. His lifelong friend, Millet, is one of the most important painters of peasant life in the world; he is not by any means a great technician, and his work is a standing refutation of those who maintain that great emotion can only be conveyed by perfect tech-

nique. Work in oil always seemed to fetter him, and it is through his drawings that he best expresses himself. He can be studied in Paris and Boston in this medium more satisfactorily than elsewhere.

The works of the 1830 men were much appreciated by Americans, to whom, indeed, much of their first recognition was due ; and it is in the private collections of the United States that we find many of the finest of them. To their influence must be attributed the making of one of the best American painters, George Innes, whose works deserve to be better known in Europe in spite of their, to some extent, derivative "make-up."

But outside their own country the men of the "Barbizon school" made themselves most felt in Holland ; it is probable, for instance, that but for them Anton Mauve would have painted upon quite other lines. Mauve has directness of presentation, and a conscientiousness in rendering simple effects which have charm : but he is very unequal, and lacks both originality and profundity in any great degree. One realizes, however, that he is a painter of whom some notice must be taken in the history of modern Dutch art. Of greater importance, however, are two of the

brothers Maris, Jacob and Mattys. Jacob Maris is a certain factor in nineteenth-century painting ; insomuch that the present-day landscape painting of his native country, such as it is, owes much to his influence. His broad and comprehensive Dutch landscapes give the atmosphere of Holland in a way that makes him in this respect perhaps the best Dutch landscape painter since the golden age of the seventeenth century. His brother Mattys has an equally great, many think a greater, temperament, and his claim to recognition cannot be denied, though his output has been small. A most unequal painter, his fame will probably rest upon a very few canvases, of which the " Three Mills " belonging to Sir Michael Sadler is a notable example.

Before passing on we must go back to England and note in a summary manner some of the contemporaries of Constable ; the chief of whom were John Sell Cotman, Peter de Wint, George Vincent and David Cox, but the last three were not of the same importance as the first named. Cotman worked upon exceptional lines not uninfluenced by Turner ; and like Constable, though to a much smaller extent, may have had his share in the artistic education of the Barbizon school.

But to fully grasp the importance of English

landscape painting at this period, acquaintance must be made with the water-colourists. In water-colour the English painters are supreme, and their works can without difficulty be adequately studied. Attention should be paid to the two Cozens, Girton, Turner, Cristall, Palmer, Copley Fielding, Cotman, Peter de Wint, Cox and Muller, slenderly endowed as some of them were.

Landscape painting has now been brought up to the time of Turner and the impressionists, and here for the time it had best be left; its later history will be dealt with more suitably in connexion with the evolutionary history of the schools.

VI

If, instead of landscape, portrait painting were taken as the means of development, the course would be somewhat more difficult and slightly different methods would be necessary: but just as the choice between portraits and landscape for the purpose is quite arbitrary, so the ultimate result in either case is identical. The essentials of portrait painting do not consist in the accurate portraying of the superficial outline of the subject—the photographer can do this as well

or better than any painter ; it consists in the portrayal of the character and temperament so far as these can be discerned by the artist.

Gainsborough and Beechey might be selected for comparison. At first it might seem that there is little to choose between them ; a certain attractiveness of presentment is characteristic of each and both—even in their least attractive portraits this must be conceded. Soon, however, it becomes apparent that Gainsborough had a capacity for delineation of character ; all of his astonishing qualities of line and verve were directed to that end, one of the main things of consequence. Herein lies his real merit, and it is the one of the chief tests of excellence in a portrait painter. Beechey, on the other hand, appears to have made it his endeavour to hide his incapacity by insistence upon prettiness and grace of presentment as ends in themselves. To fully appreciate this may need time ; but with time the discovery is certain. It would probably come one day with a portrait, the subject of which was so unattractive that he could not conceal his lack of the qualities which make an artist great.

VII

When emotion has been excited and educated, either by the study of portraits or of landscape, it will be time to enlarge one's interests and one's knowledge and to make an effort to get some grasp of painting as a whole. To enable those interested to do this is one of the chief objects of this book ; and now a scheme of approach will be sketched—a scheme having for its end the easy transition from one school to another. It need hardly be said that no attempt will be made to name every painter ; that this would be impossible is evident from the fact that Madame Errera has compiled a list of some forty thousand. And some even of the greatest will receive but scant notice or even be omitted. The object aimed at is not to give a detailed list of painters but rather to show how one school has been evolved from or influenced by another.

HOW TO APPROACH THE
DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF
PAINTING

I

THE student should now be in a position to cope with painting as a whole, and to set about obtaining a comprehensive grasp of the subject in all its phases and in all its schools. Proper method is here of supreme importance ; the one suggested will be found satisfactory in practice, as being at once easy in itself and economical in respect of time.

It would be well to go back to the eighteenth century, and spend some time with the English portrait painters. Begin, as has been already suggested, with Gainsborough and Beechey ; when Beechey is rejected substitute Lawrence, perhaps a degree better. Lawrence in turn will probably give way to Reynolds and comparisons will become more difficult.

Then by far the best course is to pass on to the seventeenth-century Dutchmen, with some of whom acquaintance has already been made. For the moment Rembrandt and Hals had better be

left alone: Rembrandt on account of the depth of his appeal; Hals because, at this stage, he might perhaps create a taste for wizard-like technique without commensurate depth. The Mieris should be studied, but they will lessen their hold in favour of Metzsu, Terborch and Dou. The next stage will probably be the elimination of the last of these as being unworthy of overmuch consideration. Jan Steen will now demand attention, and it will be found that he was to the great mass of the Dutch people very much what Metzsu and Terborch were to the middle class: how profoundly he entered into the life of the lower classes may be seen in almost everything he did. Of the good Dutchmen, Jan Steen was amongst those who maintained his artistic output at a high level; but to see him at his best a visit must be paid to the wonderful group formerly in the Steengracht collection at the Hague and now in the Mauritshuis at the Hague.

Some attention should now be devoted to the sea-painters, William Van de Velde the younger and Jan Van de Capelle—the latter's treatment of cloud-laden sky is unsurpassed in the whole Dutch school; the two river scenes (Nos. 964 and 965) in the National Gallery are masterpieces in this respect.

The way is now open to Pieter de Hooch and the great Jan Vermeer of Delft. The National Gallery and the Wallace collection contain much of the best of de Hooch's early work, in comparison with which the later is of much less importance. Vermeer is a most unequal painter ; at his best he is one of the greatest little masters, but when he falls from this level he sinks to that of the greater number of his contemporaries. He will lead the way to the study of his fellow-townsmen, Carel Fabritius, whose reputation would be even greater than it is if his works were not so exceedingly rare—there are probably ten, but only eight are at present generally accepted as genuine.

If the student feels sufficiently sure of himself, he may now venture to approach that dangerously brilliant painter, Frans Hals : but he must be warned that a subtle danger besets his path. He may be so dazzled by triumphs of technique, as for example the " Laughing Cavalier " in the Wallace collection, and the marvellous series in the museum at Haarlem, that he may find himself side-tracked eventually ; by, that is, having set up for himself a false standard for the judging of art—a standard which might lead him to think some highly esteemed and fashionable painters the greatest contemporary artists in pigment.

If this danger be kept steadily in view and avoided, considerable advantage will be derived from a study of this wizard of the brush. By means of Hals a just measure can be taken of Van der Helst, and of the whole body of portrait painters who were his contemporaries; a true appreciation, too, will be formed of Raeburn and of other painters whose work has been unreasonably pronounced by some to be the highest standard to which portraiture can aspire.

As for Raeburn, it would be well to compare his work carefully with that of Hals, for he has much in common with his artistic temperament, though he was influenced to a great extent by the conventionalities of his day—hence his theatrical accessories. The objection to Frans Hals lies in the harmful influence of his works: much of the evil from which modern art is suffering, the insistence upon technique to the elimination of all else, must be attributed to his influence and that of another great man—Velasquez—although, it is hardly necessary to add, the works of one and of the other make a profound appeal which is not to be found in those of their modern followers.

Rembrandt, the greatest Dutch master and one of the greatest of all time, may now be approached. His earlier work, that done between



Photo. Alinari.

Louvre, Paris

BATHSHEBA
Rembrandt.

1627 and 1635, should certainly be well within the grasp of the student, and of this there are good examples in the National Gallery and at Dulwich. His later work may cause some perplexity because there is nothing in the whole Dutch school which can be said to lead up to him: all the same, it is advisable to make a fairly comprehensive review of his work, and if the profound in art does not yield to the first assault, it will gradually give up its secrets as the powers of comprehension are enlarged.

The contemporaries of Rembrandt may be divided into two classes. First, we have those men who came under his influence so entirely that their own personality might be said to be more or less merged in his; Van Eechoudt, Samuel van Hoogstraten, Ferdinand Bol, Nicholaes Maes, Salomon de Koninck, etc: these serve the purpose of setting in relief the transcendent merits of their master and pave the way for gradual incursions into the realms of his mightier achievements. Then come those, who in spite of his dominating influence retained a personality of their own—Aert de Gelder, who is the probable author of the sublime "Mill," currently ascribed to Rembrandt and more especially the great landscape painter, Phillips de Koninck, whose works are very rare. All

these will be very helpful for the comprehension of Rembrandt ; but further progress in this direction must not be looked for until other schools of painting have been studied, and higher manifestations of human genius than the Dutch school generally affords examined and understood.

At this point it may be well to utter a caution against the blind acceptance of the views of any one upon the æsthetic value of any master. The student should, of course, weigh all opinions carefully, treating with respect the mature verdict of men who have made the subject their life's study ; but he should use such a verdict solely for the guidance of his studies and the formation of an opinion of his own—which, if he remains honest with himself, he will find it necessary to revise from time to time.

II

The next step should be to the Flemish school. The benefit that the student has derived from his study of the Dutch will now be felt perceptibly, and he will be able, at once, to proceed to the more important masters, avoiding, however, the primitives and the sixteenth-century painters (they will be dealt with later on) and devoting his atten-

tion exclusively to those of the seventeenth century. This period will be found to have much affinity with the school he has already been studying and to be easier of approach.

Teniers the younger is the best starting-point. His subjects and his manner of treating them can well be compared with Adrian Van Ostade and Jan Steen, and at this point the great superiority of the latter master will be apparent: the comparative artistic poverty of Teniers will be fully realized when the work of Adrian Brouwer is approached. This incomparable little master put all his contemporaries, who treated similar subjects, in the shade; he was indeed an important figure in seventeenth century art. But the dominating figure in the Flemish art of this period is Rubens. He is the fountain head of its inspiration: and his tremendous personality imprints its mark upon all.

When Rubens came on the scene, art in Flanders was in one of those transitory stages which seemed to bode ill for its welfare if some dominating personality should not impart new impulses and new ideals. Painters were content to reproduce with more or less fidelity mannerisms introduced by such men as Barend Van Orley and Jan de Mabuse: men who became so infatuated with the splendour

of the Italian renaissance that they imagined that they could successfully graft its principles upon their native art. The results, as ever in such cases, were hybrid. The stifling of their own natural temperament and the substitution of false ideals wrought havoc with their contemporaries and their followers. The brilliance of their technique and the novel point of view that they introduced gave them a meretricious success, but their art, although retaining some of the qualities of their primitive native forerunners, by the stifling of what was genuinely natural, ended, as it was bound to end, in an *impasse*. The Flemish school was in sore need of a new impulse, of a power which could save it from atrophy: fortunately that impulse was forthcoming in Rubens.

It is probable that the impressionable student will be hypnotized at the onset by this great painter. He is overwhelmingly superior to all his contemporaries: all others, with the possible exception of Van Dyck, appear to be so laboured and heavy in comparison with him that one may be tempted to say that Rubens is the Flemish school. When other schools, the French and Italian in particular, are studied, Rubens will gradually seem to become coarse and sensual, his female forms will seem vulgar, his movement



Photo. National Gallery, London.

LE CHATEAU DE STEEN
Rubens.

National Gallery, London

exaggerated, his colour too *éclatante* ; wonder may be raised as to whether he was really the mighty master the world esteems him, and a doubt may be felt as to his proper place. But as a more ordered comprehension of the whole subject is attained, doubts will disappear and Rubens will not be denied a place among the greatest artists. It matters little whether his early or his late works are studied, whether he is handling portrait, subject, or landscape, his transcendent genius always asserts itself.

Fortunately his works are so numerous and so well distributed that he can be adequately studied in almost every European country and in America. It must, however, be borne in mind, that of the crowd of canvases which bear his name, a large number bear very little evidence of his own hand. He employed numerous assistants, and frequently limited himself to superintending their labours ; consequently there is considerable difference in the quality of the works attributed to him. But he maintained a high standard in his studio ; a very small number of the works which came from it can be regarded as of anything but a high order. The idea and design are almost without exception Rubens' own, and almost without exception they are of great splendour.

Before attaining a full appreciation of Rubens, the student will probably have been fascinated by the alluring brilliance of Van Dyck and magnetized by the marvellous precocity of his talent. This great painter may seem to meet Rubens upon equal terms ; indeed, when working in Italy under the influence of the great Venetians he gained a suavity and a hypnotising fascination, which Rubens never acquired. Upon his return to Flanders he threw off the exotic, and reached the *apogée* of his talent : but it was in his English and last, although not greatest, period that his capacity for aristocratic presentation reached its culminating point : though, all the while, his artistic powers, undermined by excesses, were ever diminishing.

This idea in regard to the relative positions of Rubens and Van Dyck will probably persist for a time ; it is only when a certain maturity has been reached that the perspective will be re-adjusted. Then Rubens will assert himself and displace his brilliant assistant.

After these two masters, Jacob Jordaens should present few difficulties. His is the quintessence of the pure Flemish art of his period ; he is a painter who breathes the very soul of his native land, unadulterated by any foreign influence, and

he has all the qualities and defects of his nationality and restriction of outlook. He is heavy in imagination, thorough in his presentation, conscientious in his treatment and handling, and at his best an excellent second-class painter. Of the remaining pupils of Rubens, Gaspar de Crayer and Van Thulden are worthy of consideration and a thorough grasp of their work will help to a more complete appreciation of their master.

To Van Dyck, Gainsborough as a portrait painter was largely indebted; just as he was to Rubens for his landscapes. The consideration of his great rival, Reynolds, presents more difficulties at this stage, and had best be postponed till acquaintance has been made with the Venetians. Nothing will be lost by adopting this course, for a proper appreciation of Reynolds enables one to take the measure of a whole group of painters. Hogarth, for example, a characteristically English genius, not yet perhaps sufficiently esteemed, will become comparatively easy when the works and methods of Reynolds have been thoroughly studied.

The time has come when the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Frenchmen can be usefully employed; those of the seventeenth century should be passed over until the late Italians

have been considered. Madame Vigée Lebrun, a portrait painter who owed not a little to her English contemporaries, is a good starting-point. A very short acquaintance will be sufficient to show how superficial her art is, and how entirely she relied upon mere prettiness for her appeal. Greuze will be found just as unsubstantial, certain male portraits apart. Boucher may with advantage be taken next, and he plays an important part in French art of his period; a brilliant technician, endowed with a fine sense of balance, easy and graceful in his presentation, a good colourist within limits, he possessed all the qualities necessary to the making of a great decorative painter. In fact, as progress is made it will be realized that Boucher was, with the solitary exception of Tiepolo, the greatest decorative artist of the eighteenth century. But decorative painting of that class does not call forth the great qualities which are essential to the highest manifestations of art, and there should be no hesitation in assigning such decorative painters to the second rank, however striking their ability may be.

Then comes Fragonard with his irresistible technical qualities, the most complex personality in the whole range of eighteenth-century French

art. His amazing technique, the dashing strength of his presentment, his embodiment of the spirit of his age, may sweep us off our feet ; the immense popularity he enjoys, not only with the general public but with many cultured connoisseurs, is quite comprehensible, for few can remain irresponsive to his alluring manifestations of cleverness. But, in spite of all, one has always a certain reserve in regard to him, a reserve that grows as artistic development proceeds. Fragonard does not fall in with our mature ideas of what the greatest art should be ; for, though he maintains an indefinable charm, his adroitness becomes more and more insistent, and his relation to his own frivolous epoch more and more apparent. How essentially his art was bound up with the period is fully appreciated when we arrive at his later pictures, produced under the sobering influence of the Revolution : the pseudo-classical was utterly foreign to his temperament and he became mechanical and uninspired and his work but a reminiscence of his former glory.

A higher aspect of French art is revealed in Watteau. He represents the *apogée* of that well-ordered and spontaneous irresponsibility which is the foundation of much secondary though enduring art. His subjects border upon the

trivial, and they are no higher than those of the Dutchmen ; yet his fire, his verve, his idyllism have imparted to his frivolous and pleasure-seeking cavaliers and ladies an irresistible fascination. His art is one long glorification of gaiety and gilded uselessness ; the exquisite dresses, the love-makings, the elegant dance, the very landscape are all resplendent. The splendid series in the Wallace collection afford an adequate insight into this fascinating painter. That he owed much to Rubens can be seen by comparing his work with the Flemish master's " Garden of Love " in Madrid and the " Kermesse " in the Louvre.

After one has become saturated with the spirit of Watteau, the work of his disciples, Lancret and Pater, will appear empty indeed. They never embody the fire of their master and seldom rise to a higher level than that of excellent imitators of his subjects and, in a degree, of his method.

The acquaintance made with the Dutch and Flemish still-life painters will be most useful in approaching another French artist, Chardin, whose vast superiority to most other painters of the period will manifest itself at once. There is a profundity, a tenderness, a sense of the inner meaning of things which as a still-life painter left him peerless in French art till Cezanne came.

He will be recognized as one of the men who have to be taken into account when a review of the world's greatest art is undertaken ; he is at his best in still life, but he would still be a superb master if he had confined himself to subject pictures.

The two portrait painters of this period in France who demand careful study are Quentin Latour (who cannot be adequately appreciated outside the Saint Quentin Museum) and Perronneau, whose masterpiece is the marvellous " Portrait of an Old Lady " in the collection of Monsieur David Wiel in Paris : both worked in pastel. They are in every respect the great French limners and quite eclipse any Englishman of the period with the exception of Gainsborough, Reynolds and Hogarth.

A host of other French painters flourished at this time, who are interesting in the history of French art and have certain qualities of charm and vivacity, but, in general, are as empty of all that constitutes great art as their period was vicious and unhealthy.

III

It should now be possible to approach the Italian school, in many ways the most difficult of all ; and for the avoidance of perplexity and discouragement, the mode of approach to this school is a matter of importance. It must be remembered that the Italian masters, as a whole, carried painting to a more advanced stage than any others. They instinctively understood its functions, and during their first period, the place of technique ; and as a consequence they were rarely guilty of those pyrotechnical displays which have been so disastrous to later art. More than this, the whole spirit of their age was bursting to express its pent-up artistic impulse in tangible form. If one looks back to the time when Italian art was at its zenith, one can only marvel at the volume and superlative worth of the output. Even the minor painters are full of the real thing, not excluding those whose names and work have been for long forgotten, submerged in the flood of splendid achievement. Never has there been in any other country such an outburst, so prolonged, so universal. But for our present purpose it would be inadvisable to begin with the greatest period : one who at this stage of his study would be able to enter directly into

communion with these men, would be gifted with an uncommon responsiveness to æsthetic appeal, and any further endeavour to guide him would be mere waste of time. Speaking generally, the best way to approach the Italians is through the men of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century, with occasional reference to certain others in the eighteenth.

No better beginning could be made than by going to the Bolognese. Although their subjects and ideas have little in common with those northern painters, with whom acquaintance has already been made, they have a certain affinity with them, in the objective manner in which they approach their subjects.

Guido Reni will serve as a starting-point; but it would be wise to approach him—and the same remark applies to all the Italian painters of this time—without allowing ourselves to be influenced by modern opinion. He is one of the outcasts; whether justly so is a matter of opinion. In any case it cannot be denied that he is a strong personality, and one of whom account has to be taken; he is direct, there are no hidden mysteries in his art; and he says emphatically what he has to say. In conjunction with Guido, Domenichino will serve our purpose well: and the claims

of Francesco Albano should not be neglected. But the chief interest of the Bolognese school centres around the Carracci, of whom there were six—Agostino, Annibale and Ludovico being the chief of them. They too are out of fashion for the moment, and it may be long enough, with taste running in its present groove, before they recover their position. All of them have considerable merit : and Annibale, having the greatest temperament, frequently created things which will be more highly appreciated later. His life was turbulent and not long, but his output was considerable. His most celebrated but not his finest picture is, perhaps, the " Three Maries " formerly at Castle Howard, and now in the National Gallery. He was not, as a rule, as successful in his religious as in his mythological works ; it is in certain bacchanal and other scenes, in which energy of movement is displayed, that he is seen at his best. Among other interesting painters of this time¹ are Francesco Furini, whose treatment of the female form is frequently remarkably good, and Guercino, who had great technical ability and at his best was a suave and alluring painter.

Contemporary with Guido and Domenichino was Michelangelo Amerigi, better known as Caravaggio, who in his early days lived in Venice and

worked under the posthumous influence of Giorgione : but he is best known by his later productions done when he lived in Rome. There he founded and became the head of the Naturalisti, who had a considerable influence not only upon a group of Italian painters but also upon the Spanish school. Caravaggio's later pictures are full of exaggerated chiaroscuro ; his effects of strong light and shade seem to have been obtained by lighting his subjects from a small aperture by which he threw the shadows into strong relief. His style of painting was very popular and for a time was even preferred to the more legitimate methods of what was known as the Eclectic school, that founded by the Carracci. In fact, so greatly did Caravaggio and his school dominate the public taste that even the Eclectics were obliged to adopt their methods. The Naturalisti became most powerful, particularly when they were established at Naples : and to retain their monopoly of public favour they were not scrupulous as to the means by which they rid themselves of their opponents.

However much one may condemn the trickiness of his methods, Caravaggio was one of the most interesting painters of his time. His best pupil was Ribera, better known as Lo Spagnoletto. This remarkable Spaniard thoroughly assimilated

Caravaggio's principles, and being a painter of no mean technical capacity, rapidly made a name for himself in Italy. He was particularly in favour during his sojourn in Naples, then under Spanish rule; the resident Spanish aristocracy patronized their fellow-countryman, and through them the Prado Gallery became possessed of its large and representative collection of Ribera's works.

IV

From Ribera we can pass on to the other seventeenth-century Spaniards, those who unlike him practised their art in Spain; though in regard to most of them there is the difficulty of the inaccessibility of representative examples, the greater number of them can only be adequately studied in Madrid.

Murillo presents the least difficulty from the combined "universality" and accomplishment of his appeal: typically Spanish, he is not so dominatingly and aggressively national as are many of his contemporaries, and should prove particularly easy after a study of the Bolognese, and as his works are numerous and scattered he can be adequately studied out of Spain. The contemporary depreciatory attitude, whether merited

or not, need not now concern us, towards this Seville master should not be allowed any weight in the formation of one's opinion. To arrive at a just one, Murillo must be thoroughly studied in his pictures of peasant life and in his portraits ; and in connexion with his innumerable religious pictures it must be remembered that the religious atmosphere in which he lived imposed restrictions upon him, from which in his scenes from everyday life he was free.

Next in order Ribalta, Zurbaran, Alonso Cano, the two Herrarras, and Carducho should be taken, and with them we come into contact with the most characteristic Spanish painting. Its origin can, of course, in some measure be traced to Italy ; Spanish painting is in many ways derivative, a statement which is more or less true of every branch of the Spaniard's art—but this should not prevent us from doing it justice.

Attention should be paid to Pacheco, the Sevillian master of Velasquez, although but very few works can be definitely assigned to his brush—one of these it is interesting to note is a signed portrait in the collection of Sir Herbert Cook, in which we can see the origin of all the early work of Velasquez. The study of Velasquez himself had better be deferred for the time, and

with Velasquez that of Mazo. The intimate relation of the work of Mazo and that of the brothers Rizi with Velasquez frequently raises complex problems of attribution.

Theotocopuli must be dealt with next. The full understanding of Theotocopuli, commonly called El Greco, will come later on, after the Venetian school has been considered. He is a most important painter, whose influence upon modern art and particularly upon Cezanne and his followers has been very great. With El Greco, Goya may be taken, but he cannot be fully understood outside Madrid.

This is a suitable moment to make mention of a painter whose works are found in abundance in Spain—Luca Giordano. Although he worked for many years in Spain, his style (if indeed he can be said to have had one of his own) is based upon that of the late Italians, particularly Pietro da Cortona. He is most interesting to any one aspiring to expert knowledge of attributions. Giordano seems to have been able to imitate a number of great masters most successfully. He does not appear to have copied them but to have executed original pictures in a style so closely resembling them that he is frequently to be taken into account in the consideration of a Venetian or Spanish

picture of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The "Betrothal" for long given to Velasquez in the National Gallery is, after a comparison with the pictures in Toledo cathedral, obviously from his brush: the man in the foreground with the spectacles is Giordano himself and he occurs again in the Toledo picture.

Juan Carreño de Miranda should not be neglected, he being one of the most interesting and typically Spanish painters of his time. He is most unequal, but whenever a thoroughly good specimen of his work is found, he will be recognized as a painter ranking high in the Spanish school.

As the power of perception grows it will be realized that, with the exception of a few prominent men, painting in Spain rarely reached a great height. It was, as has been said, largely derivative, though adapted to national temperament; consequently most of it is hopelessly outclassed by much modern painting. Its interest, indeed, is largely historical.

Some of the men of the Italian and Spanish schools already mentioned will be found to base their claim to notice upon their technical ability, though their other qualities saved them from falling to the depths of modern academic painting. There is no reason why interest should not be

aroused by this merely technical skill, provided always that it is realized that the men who practise it, as an end in itself, and not as a means to an end, take in consequence a low place in the world of art.

V

Of the Italian schools of the golden period, the Venetian, though one of the greatest, is the easiest to approach ; it is concerned with more human and earthly things than, let us say, the Siennese, the Florentine, or the Lombard. And of the Venetians, Titian is the one to start with. To any one reasonably responsive, contact with Titian should cause the keenest pleasure : and the attainment of this should not be a matter of much difficulty. Fortunately he was exceedingly prolific, and his works being widely distributed are easily accessible. It will soon be apparent that the source of inspiration of many great painters has been discovered : that of Rubens, of Van Dyck, of Reynolds, to name no others. We begin to understand the make-up of the Carracci and their school ; and, in a word, to see how deeply much subsequent painting was indebted to Titian directly or indirectly. Once we have grasped his spirit and entered into communion



Photo, Mansell.

Prado, Madrid

CHARLES V.
Titian.

with him, there is nothing in the Venetian school beyond our reach.

The first step will perhaps be to Giorgione, who, had his life been longer, might have surpassed Titian himself. Who can forget the Castelfranco picture, still happily *in situ*, the "Fête Champêtre" of the Louvre (it must be by him, for who else could have painted such a transcendent work), the portraits in Budapest and Berlin, the "Sleeping Venus" in Dresden? Giorgione and Titian, in his early time, were very close to one another in their manner of work, and it is small wonder that there is considerable difference of opinion as to the authorship or share in the authorship of certain fine pictures, as, for example, the "Portrait of Ariosto" in the National Gallery and "The Concert" in the Pitti Palace.

It matters, however, but little which way the student strikes out from Titian. Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, Carpaccio, Catena, Lorenzo Lotto, Cima, the two Bonafazios, the two Palmas, the Bassanos, Previtali, Moroni, Cariani, Paris Bordone supply a well-nigh inexhaustible wealth of material: and the two Bellinis (Gentile and Giovanni) may be included as forming a connecting link between the earlier and the later art. And before the Venetians just named have been fully assimilated,

a passing acquaintance at least should be made with such earlier artists as Antonello da Messina—who too will help considerably when we reach the Florentines on the one hand and the early Flemings on the other.

We can now turn to that small band of men who made artistic Venice in the eighteenth century brilliant—Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, his son Giovanni Domenico, Sebastiano Ricci and Giovanni Battista Piazzetta. The first-named is one of the greatest decorative painters the world has ever seen; he is, it is true, best studied at Venice, but specimens of his work are to be found in almost all the great museums—Edinburgh, for example, possesses a masterpiece. And there are others belonging to the same period who may not be neglected: Canaletto, Guardi and Bellotto have fascinations not only for the student of the city of the lagoons but also for those to whom landscape makes a special appeal. Pietro Longhi, too, deserves a passing mention, for he admirably portrayed certain phases of contemporary Venetian life.

Having gained some idea of what Venice accomplished during the golden period, we may turn our attention to two remarkable men—Antonio Allegri, known as Correggio, and Parmigiano.

At first a student of painting is generally profoundly impressed by Correggio, more particularly if he has had access to his best works ; as time goes on, however, he comes across perfectly authentic productions which seem to deprive him of any claim to be considered a master of the first rank ; later on he will probably change again and the master will regain much of his lost esteem. Parmigiano, who modelled his style upon that of Correggio, will be useful for comparison, not only with him but also with the eclectic and naturalistic schools of which something has been said.

Attention should now be turned to the schools of Tuscany and Umbria, starting with Bronzino. It will be found that his portraits are, of their kind, especially commendable, and in such subject pictures as the "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time" in the National Gallery and the "Descent into Hades" in the Uffizi he is exceptionally interesting ; but a certain hardness, formality and monotony in his works proclaim a limited genius. After Bronzino it would not be amiss to glance at Andrea del Sarto : but he will not long detain us—we must leave him for one of the greatest masters in the history of art, Michelangelo Buonarroti.

The real importance of Michelangelo as a painter can hardly be grasped outside Rome, for it is in his frescoes that he is at his best.

Before proceeding further in the Tuscan school, it would be as well to turn aside to Umbria and become acquainted with Raphael and his immediate *entourage*, as by so doing we shall gain some idea of the state of painting in their time and of the influences behind them. Raphael's life was very short, but we have a large number of works which can safely be ascribed to his hand ; these are well distributed and all of them have been excellently reproduced in some form or other, so that there is no difficulty in studying him. It has become fashionable in certain circles to decry the importance of Raphael and to maintain that his merits do not justify the esteem in which he is held. One should not be unduly influenced by these views, which will probably prove to be merely temporary ; it must not be forgotten that his reputation as an artist has been very high from his own day, and that praise so universal and so constant has been extended to hardly any other artist. Raphael and Michelangelo were predominant in their time and their influence is powerfully felt even to-day ; with Leonardo da Vinci and Titian they can be truly reckoned

among the chief factors in modern occidental art.

In connexion with Raphael, Perugino will be found most helpful, for his master contributed not a little towards the maturing of his genius ; and apart from this connexion he is worthy of study.

Domenico Ghirlandaio, the master of Michelangelo, and pupil, it is said, of that fascinating painter, Alesso Baldovinetti, should be taken next. By becoming familiar with him a whole group of Florentine painters are reached, among whom are Bastiano Mainardi and Raffaellino del Garbo.

Verrocchio is better known as a sculptor than as a painter, for very little beyond the " Baptism of Christ " in the academy at Florence can with certainty be ascribed to him. There are, of course, attempts at Verrocchio attributions, and in connexion with them is often heard the name of Lorenzo di Credi, a popular but hardly a great painter, who belonged to his school. Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo are amongst the greatest names of this time and must certainly be studied, as must Luca Signorelli and his gifted master Piero della Francesca, who will be found quite different in style and feeling from the Pollaiuoli.

Acquaintance with Ghirlandaio will assist materi-

ally in regard to Botticelli, a great master with whom must be associated Filippo and Filippino Lippi, the former of whom was his master. Another interesting painter is Piero di Cosimo, whose "Death of Procris" in the National Gallery is a masterpiece, perhaps finer than anything from his brush in the Uffizi.

Never before or since has there been a time when so many great artists were working contemporaneously in any one city as was the case at this period either in Florence or in Venice. And the schools of those cities were not only the strongest numerically, but they influenced to such a degree the art of the rest of Italy that they may almost be said to have dominated it.

After Venice and Florence, Siena has the first claim to our notice. During the period under consideration it cannot compare with either Florence or Venice ; its glories belong to the fourteenth century and something will be said later of the men who then worked. Beccafumi is perhaps the only native artist who stands out in the history of Sienese art of this period ; he was influenced by Bazzi, commonly known as Sodoma, a Piedmontese formed by Leonardo da Vinci, who when still fairly young came to Siena and did much towards the infusion of new life into its decaying

art. An artist of an earlier date, though posterior to the grand period of Sieneſe art, was Matteo di Giovanni ; an interesting perſonality, whoſe “ *Aſſumption of the Virgin* ” in the National Gallery is perhaps the moſt representative work of Sieneſe painting of the later fifteenth century in exiſtence.

Our ſteps may now be directed to the North. At Milan the ſchool of painting is indebted for much of its fame to one man—Leonardo da Vinci, a remarkable genius and moſt verſatile perſonality, who had a profound influence not only upon the Milanese painters, but alſo upon ſome of the greateſt artiſts of Italy ; ſo much ſo that, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle ſay, it is difficult to treat of any painter of his time without mentioning his name. Of the painters of Milan the moſt interesting are Ambrogio da Predis, Beltraffio, Luini, Ambrogio da Borgognone and Marco d'Oggiono.

In the neighbouring Cremona, Boccaccio Boccacchino is worthy of paſſing intereſt. At Mantua, Andrea Mantegna was the dominating figure ; his importance in the hiſtory of art will be realized more and more as progreſs is made. At Ferrara there was a ſchool with ſpecial attractions of its own ; belonging to this were Cosimo Tura, Francesca Coſſa, Lorenzo Coſta and Doſſo Doſſi, all

of whom are worthy of the closest attention—the first of them being a fascinating painter whose merits, perhaps, have not even yet been fully appreciated.

VI

The renown of the great Italian painters spread far and wide, and most of the craft outside Italy wished to go there in order to profit by their example and tuition. Before, therefore, proceeding to the study of Italian art in its earlier phases, it would be as well to see what effect this influence was having and the men who were thus affected.

We have already seen how profoundly Rubens and Van Dyck were moved by the Venetian masters and how through them a new impulse was given to all subsequent Flemish art ; and also the effect upon French landscape painting of the Italian-trained Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain. Simon Vouet and his pupil Lesueur will serve as further instances of the influence of the Italians upon French art. And this brings us to the important Charles Lebrun, whose paintings, done under the fashionable Italian influence, are almost invariably cold and academic ; in spite of which his domination of the secondary arts secured for

him a commanding position in the history of French art.

Another outside influence in French art was that of Sir Peter Lely, a Dutchman, who, when at the height of his fame in England, found employment in his studio for a young French painter, Largillière by name, who was certainly not devoid of technical ability and assimilated Lely's manner of presentation and to a certain degree his technique. The style he thus developed brought Largillière into great favour upon his return to France. He, Hyacinthe Rigaud and Mignard had a virtual monopoly of portrait painting at the end of the seventeenth century and during nearly the whole of the first half of the eighteenth. The connecting links between these painters and the later French painters are Nattier and the Coypels.

After the golden days of Poussin and Claude a change gradually came about in French art. The great tradition still remained to some extent with such men as Lesueur, Jouvenet and Lebrun. Painting, however, was gradually made to serve as a splendid and appropriate accessory in schemes of decoration. With the age of magnificence which came in with Louis XIV every art was subordinated to the magnificence of interiors.

Tapestry, under the direction of Colbert and Lebrun, was brought into competition with painting on its own ground. Instead of the purely decorative and legitimate designs of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries we have the factories at the Gobelins, Beauvais and Aubusson engaged in subjects which, as they were treated, belonged essentially to the province of painting. This tendency was not only pernicious in the case of the workers in tapestry, inculcating as it did a false ideal as to its function, but it had also a deleterious effect upon the painters, whose works were hung in proximity and, to a certain extent, in rivalry with these productions. It was as much as painting could do to assert itself in the midst of the orgy of decoration which characterized the reign of Louis XIV. The painter whose work did not secure success from a decorative point of view had but little chance of recognition ; small wonder that art drifted from its more legitimate and higher channels !

To go for a moment to England, from the day that Van Dyck set foot in it, his influence became paramount ; the native painters can hardly be said to have been possessed of much artistic initiative, and his principles, if productive of much mischief, had at any rate a stimulating

effect. William Dobson, and Robert Walker were directly created by his influence ; they were quite honest and their work was even notable when the prior state of painting in England is considered.

Sir Peter Lely added to the evil done by Van Dyck. He found that the latter's manner was so popular in this country that if he wished to prosecute his art with any degree of success he would be obliged to cater for the prevailing taste. This he did successfully ; the number of his portraits affords ample proof of the encouragement he received. From his day onwards the decline was steady until the days of Hogarth : the names of Kneller, Riley, Richardson, Greenhill, Thornhill need but be mentioned.

VII

The time has now come for the primitives to be approached ; a difficult and complicated phase. At the first onset their ideas of perspective, drawing and general presentment will seem strange ; the more so that we come straight from men whose technical achievements are of the highest order. But due application and contact with them will reveal their transcendent qualities. Now more than ever it will be realized that all a

master's seeming imperfections count for nothing if he succeeds in conveying an emotional appeal through his work ; with the primitives we are near to fundamentals. Their naïveness, absolute sincerity and entire lack of self-consciousness do not reveal themselves easily ; but when they do begin to make their influence felt, the appeal is irresistible, though to fully appreciate its profundity and enduring quality a great responsiveness to simple and economically expressed art is imperative. For a beginner such a state is rare ; his first honest tendency may be to regard them as curiosities of art, but, in spite of this, he will be well advised to cultivate their acquaintance assiduously. To any one capable of being touched by the best in art, the awakening to their merits will surely come ; and in any case it must be accepted as a point beyond dispute that acquaintance with them is indispensable to an understanding of much that is best in contemporary art. Another important point that will also stand out is, that the best of them being profoundly though unconsciously moved to express their emotions, did so with all the means at their command, which means were the most concentrated, the most virile and the most masterly that could be employed.

The primitives are best approached through the Netherlanders. We must pass over the period intervening between the point at which we commenced our study of the Dutch and Flemings, when Teniers and Ruisdael were at work, to the beginning of the fifteenth century when the Van Eycks held the field.

The work of the two brothers, Hubert and Jan, can be well studied in the great polyptych, the "Adoration of the Lamb," in Ghent cathedral. Fine as their religious works are, the real criterion of their merit must perhaps be looked for in their portraits, and this is particularly so in the case of Jan, whose great "Arnolfini and his Wife" in the National Gallery, and the "Portrait of his Wife" in the Academy in Bruges are amongst the finest of the world's portraits. In connexion with the Van Eycks, the interesting Petrus Christus and the two Bouts should be studied; the latter are worthy of the closest study, though Albert did little but follow in his father's steps.

The Van Eycks, Jan especially, were more naturalistic than religious in their art, but the early Flemish school can show some painters of whom the contrary is true. Roger de la Pasture, better known as Roger van der Weyden, Hans Memlinc are two of the most striking instances.

Other Netherlandish primitives were Robert Campin, a contemporary of the Van Eycks and Jacques Daret, contemporary with the somewhat younger Roger van der Weyden ; Daret may, perhaps, be identical with the highly interesting Maître de Flemalle. Memlinc, the great Bruges master, died in 1494, some thirty years before the death of Gheeraert David, a prolific painter who worked at Bruges in a manner more or less akin to him. Acquaintance should now be made with the great Hugo van der Goes ; and Joachim Patinir of Antwerp, a most excellent landscape painter, calls for mention ; Antwerp also produced Quentin Matsys, who can be called the connecting link between the primitives and the renaissance.

Although not primitives, two of the greatest Flemish painters, Pieter Brueghel the Elder and Jerome Bosch, are best studied with them ; but no adequate idea can be formed of Brueghel's genius without visiting the Imperial Gallery at Vienna.

These Netherlanders exercised a profound influence upon more than one European country. They crossed the Rhine, and not a few were attracted to Cologne, where they seem to have met with considerable encouragement. They can be said to have created a school in that city, and from

there practically the whole of Germany was infected with their spirit. In Cologne better than elsewhere we can become acquainted with Stephan Lochner, who migrated thence from Constance, where was a school of painting in the early fifteenth century; his altar-piece in the cathedral is one of the most remarkable examples of early German painting. With Cologne, too, is associated Meister Wilhelm, of whose life but little is known.

Highly interesting is the so-called Master of St. Bartholomew, one of those men in the German school who retained the primitive feeling in a pure form; his name is unknown, but his works are distinguished by their affinity to the altar painted for the church of St. Bartholomew in Cologne and now in the Cologne gallery. Several have come down to us, and amongst them the superb example in the Louvre deserves special mention.

The anonymous painter known as the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, so-called from a series of pictures now in the Cologne museum, which formerly belonged to the Councillor Lyversberg of that city, showed the influence of Roger van der Weyden and Dierick Bouts. He occupies a very high rank in German primitive art. A curious

feature of the school is the number of anonymous works that have come down to us. Thus historians have been obliged to group their paintings around one capital work, to which they are technically related. Two of these have been mentioned already: others are the Master of the Glorification of Mary, who showed markedly the influence of Stephan Lochner and the Netherlanders; the Master of the Death of Mary; the Master of the Life of Mary; the Master of St. Severin; and the Master of Liesborn, an important Westphalian painter who worked for the Benedictine abbey of Liesborn, near Münster.

In spite of their undoubted merits, however, these early Germans can hardly be said to have added to art as did the Netherlanders and the Italians. They were content, in a sense, to accept the excellent Netherlandish tradition and keep within its limits, adapting it to their own particular needs; so that whilst their art is sound and noteworthy, it is in a measure derivative. Even their frescoes, as witness those by Master Oswald in Prague cathedral, are subject to the same criticism. Indeed, as we shall see later, this faculty of continuing conscientiously the precepts of others is characteristic of German pictorial art down to our own day.

To go now to the Iberian peninsula. A visit of Van Eyck made a profound impression on both Portugal and Spain ; and a demand was set up almost immediately for works of the Netherlanders. A steady importation of their pictures set in and continued for a couple of centuries. Netherlandish painters were invited to both countries and numbers responded to the call ; the result being that not only did Spain and Portugal become possessed of a considerable number of their masterpieces, but also the native painters were developed under their guidance. There was, too, an Italian influence at work particularly in Valencia, in Aragon and in certain parts of Catalonia, of which more will be said later on. When one considers the primitive Spanish school in its entirety, it is remarkable how little originality it displays ; most of the native painters seem to have been quite content to repeat what they had learnt from the foreigner. There is but little that we can seize upon as being characteristically and entirely national. One great man, however, stands out—Bermejo ; his “ *Pietà* ” in the chapter-house of Barcelona cathedral is one of the most moving things in the peninsula. The scarcity of his works is remarkable ; but there is a signed example in the collection of Lady Werner. An attempt has been made to give to

him the wonderful "Dead Christ" which originally came from the charterhouse of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon and is now in the Louvre; but it probably reveals merely an influence which found expression through some forgotten Avignonesse painter.

In the museum of Barcelona there is the only certain work of Luis de Dalmau, a study of which is essential to an understanding of painting as practised in Spain in the fifteenth century. Among other painters were Luis Borrassa and Antonio del Rincon, a court painter; there is reason for thinking that the picture in San Juan de los Reyes in Granada containing portraits of Ferdinand and Isabella is from the latter's hand. And alongside these men worked a great number of others whose names have been forgotten. Throughout Catalonia, Aragon and the Castiles an unusual number of native primitives are to be found even now.

In France the primitive painter belonged to a more refined order. Here again the Netherlandish influence was to a great extent paramount; and painters who were at work in Burgundy developed whatever talent there was at this time. One of the most important of the French artists was Jehan Fouquet, who was born at

Tours in the early fifteenth century : there is a wonderful collection of his miniatures at Chantilly, but his splendid triptych for the tomb of Stephan Chevalier at Melun is now, alas, distributed amongst three galleries, Antwerp, Paris and Berlin. In the north, at Amiens, Simon Marmion was working ; his fairly certain work is a triptych, the central portion of which is at Berlin and the remainder at London.

The museum of Avignon contains a number of most interesting primitive Provençal pictures in which Italian, Netherlandish and Spanish influences are strangely combined ; and across the river at the charterhouse of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, is the only known work of Eguerrand Charonton, the "Triumph of the Virgin," one of the most characteristically French works of the period. Another important French master, one of the most important, is Nicolas Froment, whose "Burning Bush" is one of the treasures of the cathedral of Aix-en-Provence ; this shows him in his maturity, and in it one sees the first blush of the renaissance.

There is so little left of the French school of the fifteenth century, that it is probable that the works of that period suffered more than on the average from the ravages of time. Beyond a

doubt the arts were extensively practised; the splendid frescoes in churches in more than one part of the country, but particularly on the Loire and in Burgundy, are quite sufficient proof of this.

VIII

From the primitives of the Low Countries we must pass on to those of Italy. The story of Italian painting is indeed a glorious one. To deal with it in its entirety we should make a beginning with the Etruscan tombs, and take the story of mural painting by way of Pompeii and the Roman catacombs to the ninth century, when we should find that painting had been gradually ousted by mosaic and that we must pass over the better part of three centuries before once more taking up the thread of our story. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century, Italian painting was Byzantine; and it was not till towards the end of the thirteenth century that Italian artists began to break away from Byzantine influence.

The beginning was made at Florence, and by common consent Florence holds the same position in regard to painting that Athens holds in regard to sculpture. Next after Florence in importance came Venice: but the two schools had very

different aims. The Florentine painters were scientific and sought for the perfection of form and perspective; the Venetian, as would be expected from its setting, worked out the problems of colour, and as colourists the Venetian painters remain unrivalled. There is a feature common to many Florentine artists which makes them stand out in the history of art—the protean character of their artistic activities; Giotto, for example, was an architect. But to detail the glories of the Florentines would be an endless task; indeed it must be said and may as well be said at once that all that can be here attempted is to set up a few finger-posts to guide the traveller on his way.

One difficulty meets us at the outset and that is to determine even vaguely who are the artists who should be included in a list of Florentine primitives. Primitive art flows so easily and so naturally into renaissance that it is well-nigh impossible to make any consistent division: for can it not be said with truth that the Italian renaissance began in the thirteenth century with Giotto and Dante? But if a division must be made, perhaps the least unsatisfactory point would be the end of the fourteenth century.

The first step was taken by Cimabue, who died in the first year of the fourteenth century. In his

work he gave full scope to his creative impulse, regardless of all existing conventions ; he produced a more flowing and less restricted line and with this there was greater freedom in composition. There is a story told in connexion with Cimabue's Madonna in Santa Maria Novella in Florence which shows how responsive to art was the Florentine people ; for it is said that in the exuberance of their joy they made a solemn procession in the quarter in which Cimabue lived, which for all future time was known as the Borgo Allegre.

But his greatest service to art was the discovery of Giotto. That Giotto surpassed his master was evident to his contemporaries, and the fact is noted by Dante :

Credette Cimabue nella pittura
Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido
Si che la fama di colui è oscura.

Giotto's name will for ever be associated with the Arena chapel in Padua, with Assisi, and with Santa Croce in Florence ; but few paintings which can with certainty be attributed to him are found elsewhere.

Half a century after the death of Giotto came the birth of another great man, Masolino, whose most celebrated works are at Castiglione d'Olona, in the province of Como, and in the Brancacci



Church of Santa Croce, Florence

THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

Giotto.

Photo. Anderson, Rome.

chapel in the church of the Carmine in Florence. Masolino was the master of Masaccio who worked with him in the Brancacci chapel: the easel paintings of the latter are very few in number and it is a matter for supreme congratulation that one of them was recently acquired by the trustees of the National Gallery.

The rapidity with which Florentine art had moved along the new lines may be gauged by a study of the brothers Orcagna, of whom Andrea was in some respects the greatest of the Florentines after Giotto: like so many of the Tuscan painters his activities were not confined to one form of art as the splendid mosaics at Orvieto and the tabernacle in Or San Michele in Florence testify. There is only one painting certainly from his hand, an altar-piece in Sta Maria Novella in Florence; the frescoes in that church being probably by his brother Nardo, an artist scarcely his inferior.

But probably of all the early Florentines, Fra Angelico, a black friar of Fiesole, will prove as attractive as any: he is indeed one of its most lovable characters. His works fortunately are numerous and widely scattered; but they abound in Florence, and nowhere is the delicacy and refinement of his art more manifest than in the frescoes

of the Dominican friary of St. Mark's, the convento di San Marco, in Florence. Of Fra Angelico, the gifted Benozzo Gozzoli was a follower and assistant, and his works, which are well distributed, should not be neglected.

Another illustrious Florentine, Paolo Uccello, has always been highly appreciated by those who admire the greatest in art. He was a scientific painter; Constable spoke of him as being "either the inventor or the perfecter of parallel perspective." His greatest work, the "Rout of S. Romano," is in the National Gallery—though it is nearly matched by other paintings of the same subject treated differently in the Louvre and the Uffizi. Florence is so crowded with great men that selection is a matter of difficulty; most of them must be left unmentioned, but the name at least must be recorded of Uccello's great contemporary, Andrea del Castagno, a virile artist.

We are now well into the fifteenth century, and it is hard not to linger over Fra Filippo Lippi, Filippino, his son, Botticelli and the rest who would take us on to the mighty Michelangelo and the sixteenth century. But considerations of space are imperative and we must pass on to the other great school, that of the hardly less fascinating Venetians; but it will be well to linger

on the way to give a glance at the Sienese and some other Tuscans and at their neighbours, the Umbrians.

Contemporary with Cimabue and Giotto there was a remarkable Sienese painter, Duccio di Buoninsegna, who had probably studied in Constantinople; certainly he was completely under Byzantine influence. But he was a great artist and surpassed Giotto in his facial types.

Duccio's pupil, Simone Martini, produced works of a very high order, which fortunately are easily accessible: he too had a pupil of note, Matteo da Viterbo, whose work may be seen at Avignon, in the palace of the popes and in the charterhouse at Villeneuve. Two other well-known men are said to have been pupils of Duccio—Lippo Memmi and the prolific Pietro Lorenzetti; and another early Sienese of whom notice should be taken is Ambrosio Lorenzetti, pupil of his brother Pietro. The influence of the brothers Lorenzetti on Sienese art was lasting. Of the later painters, Sassetta, Andrea Vanni, and Vecchietta must certainly receive attention; but it will undoubtedly be realized that at no period of its history was the Sienese school of the same importance as the Florentine.

As with the Sienese school so with the Umbrian,

the earliest painters of note are later in date than the earliest of the Florentines; Alegretto Nuzi, the first of any importance, died in 1374. He worked at Fabriano, a place which still possesses a number of his works; the rest are fairly scattered and one of them is in England in the collection of Sir Herbert Cook. Gentile da Fabriano was a pupil of Alegretto; of his works, too, one is in England, in Buckingham Palace—America is more fortunate in that it possesses a couple. Others who must be considered are Ottaviano Nelli; Niccolo da Foligno, a pupil of Benozzo Gozzoli; Luca Signorelli; Pintoricchio; Perugino, who was influenced by the Florentine Verrocchio; and, the best known of the Umbrians, Perugino's pupil Raphael, has already been mentioned.

To pass on to Venice, we have already been in contact with Antonello da Messina, who journeyed to the Low Countries that he might study the Van Eycks at first hand. Netherlandish influence is manifest in the works of his brush; but the colder northern manner was not capable of taking root in the warmer soil of Italy; and, indeed, in the second half of the fifteenth century there was by far too much native energy bursting out in every direction for any foreign influence to

be needed—it was to Italy that men were to look as to the fountain-head of art.

Contemporary with Antonello was Jacopo Bellini, who had been a pupil of the Umbrian Gentile da Fabriano and of Pisanello of Verona. Jacopo Bellini was the founder of the Venetian school, and his work was carried on by his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni. But his influence was not confined to Venice, it extended to Padua; Andrea Mantegna, that great painter who was to marry Bellini's daughter, came under it after he had been trained by Squarcione, the founder of the Paduan school. Gentile Bellini was in turn influenced by the Paduans, as was his brother Giovanni by the Florentine Donatello. From the Bellini family issued most of what was great in Venetian art. Among the pupils of one or other of the brothers, Gentile and Giovanni, must be included Giorgione, Titian, Carpaccio, Cariani, Bissolo, Marconi, Catena, Bartolomeo Veneto, Rondinelli, Palma Vecchio and Sebastiano del Piombo; Cima and Bonsignori were influenced by them; Marco Basaiti must be reckoned among their followers.

Other important factors in the formation of Venetian art were the two Vivarini, Bartolomeo and his nephew Alvise. Bartolomeo, after being a pupil of Giovanni and Antonio da Murano, came

under the influence of the Paduan school: he was the master of the mystical Carlo Crivelli and of his own nephew Alvise, who in turn had for pupils Jacopo di Barbari, Marco Basaiti, Bon-signori, Cima, Lotto, Montagna and Pordenone.

The key-note of the Venetian school is splendour of colouring. The school came into being at the time when Venice held a position in regard to trade not much unlike that of modern England, and as a consequence its nobles, all great traders, or the chief of them, were enormously wealthy, Great wealth had its natural sequel great luxury: luxury which found its gratification in the magnificent palaces which line the Grand Canal; and for these palaces was needed the decorations in colour which the Venetian artist supplied. It looks indeed as if the Venetian had no thought for art till he had become rich; and that when he could devote his attention to it, he simply wanted decoration to enhance the beauty of his house and his own glory—which reminds one of the sketch made by Mr. Roger Fry in the pages of the *Burlington Magazine*¹ of the correlation of wealth and art in another and more modern country. The Venetian painters must indeed have been great to produce their glorious works under such conditions.

¹ April, 1916.

IX

From the beginning of the sixteenth century onward, Italian influence dominated European art ; artists from far and wide went to Italy to study the methods of its painters. The effect of this domination, it must be said, was not always satisfactory : this, for the simple reason that artists of other nations, dazzled by their achievements and anxious to emulate them, thought they could do so by the simple method of adopting their technique. Of this the Netherlanders were an example.

The art of the Low Countries in the sixteenth century is curiously adulterated. The best men had still something of the fire of their predecessors ; and they cannot be regarded as wholly negligible in spite of their obvious and, it must be admitted, successful striving for technical advancement. Indeed, it seems impossible that they could have pursued any other course. The primitive stage had passed ; to have reverted to its principles would have been mere affectation, utterly opposed to the canons of good art. Nothing but self-consciousness could have resulted, and self-consciousness is fatal to vital infection. With the irresistible influences of the Italian renaissance

at work, a change in art expression was inevitable.

The earlier men, such as Quentin Matsys, Joachim Patinir, Henri de Bles, men who lived on the fringe of the movement, betray but little of what was to come. In the case of Quentin Matsys there is a certain broadening out, a desire to prepare for the coming manner by a more scientific and elaborate technique. In a fine early triptych, which was painted for the church of St. Peter in Louvain, he is still working, at the age of fifty or thereabouts, in the best Netherlandish manner ; but after this he became more and more impressed by the new principles emanating from the south.

It is, however, when we come to Barent van Orley that we observe how the art of Italy had subjugated that of the Netherlands. In 1509, being then eighteen years of age, he went to Rome, and there became a pupil of Raphael, who seems to have had a high opinion of his talents. His early pictures, though betraying the influences by which he was surrounded, radiate the spirit of his native country ; but constant contact with the greatest painters of the age—Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo—in the end killed his originality. He gave himself over to imitating those around him ; and in the estimation

of his contemporaries he was so successful that a brilliant career opened itself out. It is interesting to note that he was employed in the designing of tapestry, in which his best-known work is found in the series representing the life of Abraham at Hampton Court and in that known as the "Maximilian Hunts" in Paris: it is said that he superintended the weaving of the tapestries from the cartoons of Raphael.

Quite as important and perhaps even more characteristic of the change that was coming over the Netherlandish school was Jan Gossart. Born about 1472, he came under the influence of Quentin Matsys; but in 1508 he went to Rome in the train of Philip of Burgundy; and in Rome his patron employed him in copying works of art which appealed to him. This led to a complete change in his manner. He absorbed Italian ideas and endeavoured to embody them in his own work; and upon his return to the Low Countries he continued to paint in an Italian manner. His early style is admirably represented by the imposing "Adoration of the Magi" formerly in the possession of the Earl of Carlisle and now in the National Gallery; than which it would be difficult to find a better example of the art of the transition period. Retaining the vestiges of the Van Eyck

tradition, purely Netherlandish in presentation and technique, it yet impresses one more by its brilliance and by the efforts at technical advance than by those higher qualities which raised the earlier painting of the school to so high a plane. How Italianized Gossart became later, can be seen in the "St. Luke painting the Blessed Virgin and Child" formerly in Mechlin cathedral and now in Prague.

Among other artists of the Low Countries who were affected by the Italianizing movement were Jan van Scorel, a portrait painter of high repute; and Michael van Coxie the Elder, who copied Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb."

There are, however, a few men who were less affected by the Italian influence, though their works show that they were fully alive to the contemporary advance in technique. Foremost among these was Antony Mor, a pupil of Jan van Scorel, who was admitted to the guild in Utrecht in the middle of the sixteenth century. He went to Rome in 1550, then to Madrid and Lisbon; and before returning to the Netherlands worked in London at the beginning of Mary's reign. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest portrait painters of his time; and evidence of his influence upon Spanish art is manifest in the works of Juan

Pantoja de la Cruz and Alonzo Sanchez-Coello.

Reference has just been made to Spain, and when we turn our mind to that country we find that on the Mediterranean coast, in Catalonia and Valencia, as well as in the Balearic Isles, the influence of the Italian renaissance predominated. But we shall look in vain for anything much beyond a slavish copying of presentment and mannerisms—the museum at Valencia is full of undoubted Spanish works of this character. Elsewhere in the peninsula the Netherlandish tradition still held its ground ; but the Spanish painters of those regions had no objection to the principles of the renaissance if they passed through Netherlandish channels. Thus, for example, Petrus van de Velde or Kempener, known in Spain as Pedro Campana, who was born in Brussels in the first years of the sixteenth century, passed a great part of his early life in Italy and thoroughly assimilated its artistic principles ; from Italy he went to Andalusia and settled in Seville, where he did not a little towards the creation of its school of painting.

In another country which had been under the influence of the Netherlanders, Germany, the effect of the renaissance was tremendous ; an extraordinary activity broke out, particularly in

the Rhenish provinces and the south—North Germany has ever contributed but little to the arts. The Germans retained their colder outlook on pictorial art, which was doubtless due to temperamental reasons. Cases in which they show something akin to the Italian temperament are rare and due almost wholly to the particular painters having lived long years in Italy. No one is so capable as the German of absorbing the influence under which he lives as to be mistaken for one of the race amongst which he dwells. An instance of this, in the period with which we are dealing, is to be found in Jan Stephanus van Calcker, who studied under Titian at Venice and lived the rest of his life in Italy, leaving excellent portraits in the manner of Titian; and perhaps another in the mysterious Jacopo de' Barbari, who may possibly be identified with Jacob Walch. Those German artists, however, who stayed in their native country and felt the influence of the renaissance as it spread over Europe, were essentially cold and in many ways conventional. Their art, whilst still national and frequently excellent, is more or less a compromise between that of the Low Countries and that of Italy.

The direct Netherlandish influence coming through Martin Schöngauer, although it had

become powerfully Germanized, can be traced in the works of Hans Baldung or Grien, whose portraits are full of individuality. Another painter to be noticed is Bartholome Zeitbloom, a reputed pupil of Schöngauer's, who worked in Ulm ; and from Zeitbloom's studio came the interesting Bernhard Strigel, who travelled all over southern Germany. He was a prolific painter, and it may be said of him, as of most of the German painters of this period, that his portraits, which are excellent, are much more interesting from an artistic point of view than his subject pictures. Another painter connected with Ulm is Martin Schaffner, who worked in the Schöngauer tradition and must not be neglected ; and the same may be said of Lucas Cranach the Elder, a Saxon, who was portrait painter to three electors of Saxony.

German art of this time, however, centres round two prominent men—Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein the Younger. Dürer, born in Nuremberg in 1471, was a pupil of Michel Wolgemut. He was a master of line, and although his work is frequently open to the reproach of being overcharged, he must still be assigned a high place amongst the world's great masters. His power of trenchant character analysis is indeed remarkable : in his portraits, which are his best works, his

analysis of the personage is absolute to the verge of brutality. His visits to Venice, although they brought him into contact with the works of its great painters, do not appear to have greatly deflected his course. His life work is one steady development, the product of a man who knew his powers and how to utilize them. His quality of penetration, one might say dissection, of the character of his sitter appealed strongly to the German and he exercised a powerful and, on the whole, good influence on the German school.

If, however, Dürer may be said to be the great analytical portrait painter of the time, Hans Holbein may well be described as the chief syncretical. Both had been impressed by works of Mantegna, whose influence has perhaps been greater upon the best men in the German school than that of any other Italian painter. Hans Holbein the Younger was born in Augsburg in 1497. He was the son of Hans Holbein the Elder, himself a painter of considerable power. The greater part of his working life was divided between Basel and England, and in England he died when only forty-one years of age. His influence in Germany was greater than that of Dürer; in England it was paramount on what little native talent there was; and he had not a little to do

with the forming of the French portrait painters, the two Clouets and Corneille de Lyon. This explains the fact that no master, perhaps, has suffered so much as Holbein from having all kinds of works fathered upon him ; but of late years there has been a ruthless weeding out, and we are now in a position to form a true idea of his genius : but to understand this fully one must see the wonderful collection of his early works at Basel, as well as the drawings there and at Windsor.

To complete the survey of Netherlandish influence on the art of northern Europe we must turn our eyes to France and see how much the sixteenth-century French school owed to it for its developments : for some reason or other a very small quantity of the work of that school has come down to us.

The history of early French painting must to a great extent be studied in miniatures : though time has fortunately spared us some larger works, among which are a few works by Nicolas Froment, the triptych by Jehan Fouquet now permanently broken up, and the one example of the work of Enguerrand Charonton at Villeneuve-lès-Avignon.

There is one great painting of this period, a triptych at Moulins, which has certain fascinating qualities, harmony of arrangement and suavity

of treatment, and which embodies religious fervour. As to the authorship of this, much speculation has been expended—so far without avail. Some, indeed, contend that it was the work of an Italian, basing their opinion on the fact that it embodies points of technique which we associate with the Italian renaissance. On the other hand, there are those who would see in it the work of a French artist, relying for this upon the French types portrayed in it; though there is not much in this argument if we consider the possibility of an Italian painter working at Moulins from French models. Probability is, however, in favour of the artist being a Frenchman who had submitted to a strong Italian influence. For the moment this may be accepted, the more so that around it are grouped a number of other things which bear so strong an affinity to it that provisionally they are described as being from the hand of the master of Moulins.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century a new note in French art was struck by Jean Clouet, known as Janet. His work has a strong resemblance to that of Holbein, to whom a number of his paintings have been attributed. Clouet's nationality is doubtful, but probably he was a native of the Low Countries; at any rate, his art has a strong flavour of such men as Scorel and

the Master of Oultremont.¹ Very few portraits can with any certainty be given to him ; but among them are those of Francis I in the Louvre, of his son Francis at Antwerp, and of an unknown man at Hampton Court. François, his son, was also a painter, and founded his manner upon that of his father, as can readily be seen by studying the portraits in the Louvre and those at Versailles and Chantilly. Somewhat under the influence of the Clouets the interesting Corneille de Lyon was working at Lyons : he and his family (assisted, perhaps, by other painters working in his manner) are responsible for a number of portraits of quality.

Other portrait painters working in the same tradition were the Dumoutier family and the brothers Quesnel ; and if contemporary records are any sure guide, there must have been a veritable rage for portrait painting at this period.

The growth of French art was neither lusty enough to establish itself firmly in the soil, nor could it resist the all-dominating influence of Italy. Francis I, an enthusiastic admirer of the sumptuous, who never tired of patronizing the arts, came under the spell of Italy ; and the

¹ A splendid example of the portraiture of the Master of Oultremont is in the Roscoe collection at Liverpool.

exploits of Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano, at Mantua firing his ambition, he induced two able Italian painters, Giambattista dei Rossi, better known as Rosso, and Francesco Primaticcio, to work together upon the palace of Fontainbleau. Unfortunately, little remains of their work, but their advent could not fail to have a profound effect upon whatever painting existed ; Rosso's work shows a combined influence of Andrea del Sarto and Michelangelo, and Primaticcio had absorbed the principles of Raphael through his connexion with Giulio Romano. The French school, in fact, became more and more Italianized, and this continued at least till the time of Louis XIV. If one wishes to form a true appreciation of French art, before the Italianizing process began, study of the drawings at Chantilly and in the National Library in Paris is essential.

X

We had better take up again the threads of the history of English painting. With Constable, Cotman and the landscape painters in general we have dealt already : it remains to say something of the rest. Hoppner and Lawrence did what in them lay to carry on the tradition of Reynolds,

but they fell far short of their great predecessor; the other portrait painters of that period need not detain us, it will suffice to mention West, Phillips, Jackson and Shee. Nor need we dwell on the genre painters, of whom Wilkie was incomparably the best: followers of the Dutch little masters, they had a deplorable influence upon English taste. Most of them were men of but meagre artistic ability, but who yet possessed the knack of telling a good story; it is only necessary to mention Mulready, Webster and Frith, the last of whom belongs to a later date than the others. But there are painters of this period who cannot be so lightly dismissed—those connected with the pre-Raphaelite movement.

The real founder of this movement was Ford Madox Brown, who was born at Calais in 1821. Showing an early predilection for art, after he had received a good education at Ghent and Bruges, he entered the studio of Baron Wappers, a painter who insisted on the imperative necessity of good drawing. When he left Wappers he worked for three years in Paris, and whilst there offered three subjects in the competition for the Westminster cartoons, one of which was accepted. In 1845, for family reasons, he went to Italy, where he made acquaintance with the finest productions

of the Florentine and Sienese schools. This was the deciding point in his career : he resolved to abjure modern tendencies and technique and to endeavour to attain the methods of the men whose sincerity and painstaking work so powerfully impressed him by its emotional appeal. He realized, fortunately, that mere plagiarism would not do. If he was to succeed, he must absorb their principles and work upon their lines, and then forget their existence, lest he should be tempted to borrow from them. In a word, whilst owing everything to their precepts, he must remain himself. He further showed his good sense by not attempting subjects which were only suitable to fourteenth and fifteenth-century art : he utilized the extraordinary technique that he had acquired in portraying subjects to which his genius could do justice. Who can deny the directness of appeal, within limits, of his " Work " in the Manchester Gallery, the " Christ washing Peter's Feet " in the Tate, or that of his greatest work, the " Last of England," now the possession of the Birmingham Gallery ? In the last mentioned he brings before us the poignancy of emigration ; the departure of the ship, the disappearing shores of England, left behind most likely for ever ; the sadness of a middle-class emigrant who

has wrenched himself from the land of his birth to better the lot of himself, his wife and child, the defiant farewell of another who is shaking his fist at the fast-disappearing land ; the sense of sea air in the picture ; the austere simplicity of the emigrant ship, all this is well worked out. The emigrant is Brown himself, and with him is his wife, holding their child in her arms. Brown himself said of this picture, that " to ensure the peculiar look of light all round which objects have on a dull day at sea, it was painted for the most part in the open air on dull days and, when the flesh was being painted, on cold days. Absolutely without regard to the art of any period or country, I have tried to render this scene as it would appear. The minuteness of detail which would be visible under such conditions of broad daylight I have thought necessary to imitate, as bringing the pathos of the subject more home to the beholder."¹

We have already had a glimpse of the state of English art at this time. Small wonder, then, that Brown found no regard for the works executed after his return from Italy ; he was either rejected or infamously hung at the Royal Academy, private patrons were scarce, ridicule was his lot

¹ Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, London, Bell, 1901, at p. 21.

at the hands of the critics. So accustomed did he become to this treatment that he looked for nothing else ; and when one day he received a letter from a young man, couched in enthusiastic terms, asking him to receive the writer as a pupil, Brown was inclined to think that that writer was ironical and prepared to answer the ill-placed humour by corporal punishment if his surmise should prove correct. When, however, Dante Gabriel Rossetti presented himself, all doubts as to his sincerity were dispelled, and a lifelong friendship began. Rossetti was a great friend of Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, though Millais was then only in his twentieth year and Hunt in his twenty-second. Rossetti infected his two friends with his admiration for Brown's ideals, though, not having the technical ability of either of them, he was discouraged himself. They, however, persuaded him to persevere with what results we know. These three men formed the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. The name Pre-Raphaelite has given rise to much misunderstanding, but Mr. Hueffer's *Ford Madox Brown* makes its origin clear. When Brown was in Rome, in 1845, he met Cornelius and Overbeck, who had founded some thirty-five years previously a society of German painters known as the Pre-

· Raphaelite brethren. Brown spoke of this German society to his disciples, Rossetti, Millais and Hunt : they adopted its name for themselves, but, for some reason, never asked Brown to share it with them. The ideals of the brotherhood in the first instance were to approach their subjects with honesty and sincerity ; and consequently to paint everything they understood down to the minutest detail, with, that is, that thoroughness and truth which characterized the works of so many of Raphael's predecessors. The trio had discovered nothing new for themselves, they were simply putting into practice Brown's precepts, though they found a further source of inspiration in the works of the mystical and supremely important William Blake. At any rate, their principles precluded the bombastic and the insincere, and eliminated sordid and academic aspirations.

Their first efforts, exhibited in 1849, were not badly received by the public and critics ; these young men had struck a novel note. The meaning of the mystical letters P.R.B. after their names in the catalogue was not generally known until the following year ; but once known, the conspiracy, for so it was treated, of three young men, against the staid, quasi-official and academic art of England, was an affront not to be overlooked.

Abuse was poured upon them and was silently borne for a couple of years ; then Ruskin took up the cudgels on their behalf, as he had already done for Turner, and his advocacy carried all before it. Opposition, fierce as it had been, died down, and a placid acquiescence in the principles of the brotherhood took its place. Herein lay the seeds of its ultimate downfall. Once a movement has been freely accepted, adherents and hangers-on, mostly incapable of grasping its fundamental ideas, spring up from every quarter and encompass its destruction ; it becomes a cult. So it was with the Pre-Raphaelite movement : from its inception and in its most competent hands, it was merely a backwater from the main current of art ; its merits, such as they were, came to an early death from anæmia. The backwash of this movement may be seen in some of the worst academy pictures of the present day.

Not one of the three Pre-Raphaelites could compare with their master Ford Madox Brown ; and they were indeed a curious trio. First came Rossetti, a dreamer, half literary, half artistic, who never had sufficient facility at his command to do justice to his abilities ; ever wrestling with the means of expressing himself, during the process he lost a great deal of what he had to say. Then Millais, a

bluff Englishman, mildly emotional, very hard-headed, cold and methodical, who knew when Pre-Raphaelitism had had its day and promptly forsook it. He nevertheless painted one of the most characteristic Pre-Raphaelite pictures in existence—the “Ophelia” in the Tate Gallery, with which nothing else from his brush can compare. Millais had the facility of expressing himself—particularly in his Pre-Raphaelite period; there are few signs of labour or struggle in his technique, few errors of drawing, and none of composition. Technically considered, his “Escape of a Heretic,” “Order of Release” and “Lorenzo at the House of Isabella” are among the most perfect products of the movement. If Ford Madox Brown and Rossetti were the fine gold of the movement, Holman Hunt was the dross; he was by no means well equipped technically and was always moralizing in paint. Most of his pictures were to serve some moral purpose; and his most characteristic productions are of so sickly a sentimentality that they can hardly be considered as coming within the domain of art.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement undoubtedly had a stimulating and uplifting if but temporary effect upon British art, and probably saved it from atrophy. Among the later men who worked directly

under its influence Hughes and Paton are perhaps worthy of mention. But the principles it inculcated bore fruit in many directions. Burne-Jones will serve as an instance. Like Brown, he followed the early Tuscans, but, unlike Brown, who merely adopted their characteristic honesty, sincerity and unconsciousness for the purpose of transmitting his own emotions, he appropriated their manner of looking at things and, it may be said, their sentiments, in a degree, though these he naturally adapted to his British temperament. This was illegitimate ; it was an attempt to pass off ideas derived from alien sources as original. Brown would certainly not have owned as his disciples Burne-Jones and his associates. He would have regarded their art not only as sentimental and decadent, but as something closely akin to plagiarism.

A complicated superstructure of theory was built upon Brown's original idea. A cult arose, aided by such writers as Ruskin, and a false and exotic æstheticism drowned the primitive principle of the movement in a welter of irrelevant matter. As time went on, almost any painter who manifested a devotion to microscopic detail was acclaimed as a Pre-Raphaelite. The movement which had been so auspiciously started by Brown

was already decadent in the hands of Hunt, Rossetti and Millais ; their followers completed the ruin and British art, which might have received a new impetus, was again in an *impasse*. Then came a man deserving of mention, to a large extent a product of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, who probably did more to revive interest and taste in the arts and crafts than any other man of his generation. I mean William Morris.

Whilst the Pre-Raphaelite movement was in progress, a group of young men were working upon other lines, Mason, Walker and Pinwell ; an instance of French art, through Jean François Millet and Jules Breton, influencing a phase of British art. Walker's " Harbour of Refuge " and " Vagrants " in the Tate Gallery give a good idea of his insight into the pathetic, almost sentimental, side of human life ; Mason is also well represented in the Tate Gallery by " The Cast Shoe " and " The Wind on the Wold."

Landscape painters are of but little importance at this period. Linnell was perhaps the best of them. Somewhat later, however, Lawson (who was cut off in his early prime) showed a certain promise ; his " Valley of the Doone " is one of the most impressive landscapes of the modern English school. In another branch, that of

animal painting, Swan must be mentioned ; he rivalled and sometimes surpassed the Frenchman Barye.

To this brief description of the modern English school need only be added a reference to Watts ; an artist who enjoyed a certain popularity and who refused to make his appeal upon the grounds of pure art. He utilized his talent to inculcate morality ; his " Mammon," his " Time, Death and Judgment," and his " Eve Repentant " in the Tate Gallery (where alone he can be adequately seen) are instances of his endeavours in this direction.

XI

Passing to the continent, not much need be said of the Dutch painters of the period, though the output of pictorial art was considerable and æsthetically negligible, but attention must in passing be given to the work of Josef Israels, who seems still to have a great hold on the public. So much for Holland ; as for Italy and Spain, it can only be said that the state of the art of painting was deplorable.

As other nations declined, France seemed to gather new strength. The men of 1830, the

Barbizon school, were dealt with in connexion with landscape ; Corot, Troyon, Millet, Rousseau and Diaz were discussed, and to this list must be added the name of Daumier, a great painter whose work has profoundly influenced the younger generation of French artists. The greater part of his life was given up to drawing for reproduction ; and one can only appreciate the greatness of his genius from a drawing or painting done to satisfy his creative impulse and not for commercial purposes.

Side by side with the men of 1830 a number of others were at work and a comprehension of some of them is necessary for a thorough understanding of the important developments which followed. Gros is one of these, and his importance is not to be sought in his art but rather in the fact that he was the master of Delaroche and Delacroix, who became the recognized leaders in the struggle between what are known as the classical and the romantic schools ; the latter differing from the former in its preference for grandeur and healthy vigour to classical finish and proportion ; Delaroche led the classicists, Delacroix the romanticists.

Gros was a pupil of David and belonged to the classical school ; he departed from its tradi-

tions in so far that he abandoned classical subjects and costumes, but he still retained the restrained and cold feelings favoured by that school. His pupil, Delaroche, possessed some sense of independence and rebelled against the remnants of classicism found in the art of Gros, but he was not prepared to take the leap that Delacroix took and go directly against the prevailing sentiment. He took a middle course. Gifted with great facility of superficial presentation, he selected things which in his hands were certain of public approbation. By this his success was assured. He speedily became one of the masters to whom budding pupils flock for instruction, and by whom they are developed into mediocrities ; unless they have sufficient originality and capacity to revolt against the fettering traditions of their master's studio. Such men as Delaroche, Cabanel, Gérôme are perhaps essential to the development of French art, but they themselves do not play any important part in its history.

At this juncture it will be necessary to retrace our steps in order to make acquaintance with the works of Pierre Prud'hon, a painter of considerable merit and great charm, though one who did not greatly influence subsequent painting. It

seems, when looking at his pictures, hardly possible to believe that he was living so far back as 1758, for his work has far greater affinity with that of a later period. His development was furthered by a visit to Italy, when he came under the spell of Correggio and Leonardo da Vinci. The result was a suave and sensitive style, almost effeminate in its charm and yet full of a winsome irresistibility.

A little later than Prud'hon—in 1780 to be exact—was born the great Ingres. He was developed in the classic school; and a visit to Italy confirmed his conviction of the supreme necessity of line and form. It was consequently to the painters of Central Italy that he looked for the advancement of his genius; the gorgeous colour of the Venetian school had no attraction for him. The result in his case was a refined style, which appeals powerfully to a cultivated judgment. His "Francesca da Rimini" at Chantilly is a striking instance of successful treatment of subject, and "Le Bain Turc" and "L'Odalisque" both in the Louvre show how subjects in themselves sensual can be treated with delicacy of presentation; whilst his portraits, owing to their immaculate draughtsmanship, impeccability of composition and character delineation, are triumphs of

art. Tardily recognized during life, he is venerated by the majority of modern painters and critics.

Delacroix, the other pupil of Gros, was destined to play a supreme part in the development of French art. When he began his artistic career, early in the nineteenth century, he first entered the studio of Guerin, amongst whose pupils were Ary Scheffer and Gericault, the latter of whom was to play the part of reformer with Delacroix. Later he became a pupil of Gros, and was brought into contact with the tradition of the classicists against the principles of which, however, he revolted before long. The smooth painting it imposed, the abnormal degree of attention to line at the expense of colour, the artificiality, the restriction of passion within prescribed limits, the domination of an academical school prescribing, with all the insolence of dogmatic tyranny, the bounds of legitimate expression, aroused his sense of revolt. He and Gericault raised the standard of rebellion.

Delacroix repudiated the domination of conventional outline to the detriment of many other qualities ; and being fully convinced that light and shade were largely matters appertaining to colour, to colour he looked for the working out of his artistic salvation. The surface of his

painting became rough ; wherever he found it necessary he piled up the paint. His compositions were no longer based upon the conventional model, borrowed from Italy ; he looked for guidance to Rubens, his passionate worship of whom can be gauged from his letters published in 1880. So great was his dislike of the Italian influence that he would never visit Italy ; Spain, Morocco and Algiers furnished him with subjects. All this horrified the classicists ; here indeed was high treason, anarchy at large and unashamed. The struggle between the two factions was bitter ; the issue never in doubt. Classicism was doomed.

To Gericault, however, belongs the honour of issuing the first direct challenge to the upholders of the classic school : his " Raft of the Medusa " now in the Louvre was exhibited at the Salon of 1819, and the storm burst in all its fury. Gericault died five years later at the early age of thirty-three. But the fight went on ; and some years later the opponents of romanticism received support from an unexpected quarter.

In 1839 Chevreul, a man of science, who was at one time the director of the Gobelins tapestry works in Paris, published a brochure in which for the first time an attempt was made to deal

scientifically with the question of colour in relation to painting, tapestry and so forth.¹ Delacroix was profoundly impressed; for here was scientific corroboration of the views he had instinctively held. But he did not markedly modify his technique for, long before Chevreul's theory was published, he had discovered the formula for the expression of his emotions; the man of science merely corroborated his method. In order to get the broken surface which his paintings in part present Delacroix employed colour in wafers. He was not the first to do so, some of the men founded upon the Dutch and Flemish painters had employed them more or less; to him, however, must be awarded the merit of re-discovering the method at a vital moment in the history of European art. I have frequently wondered whether Turner was not influenced by Delacroix' technique; he must have had opportunities of seeing his works during his visits to the continent, and such influence would explain in a measure the development of his technique after 1830. One

¹ Chevreul probably was much helped by the researches of our English Young, whose discoveries were later used so successfully by Helmholtz and others. From these men the art of painting received its first contact with the science of optics, an influence destined to have incalculable effects upon subsequent painting.

man of the English school Delacroix certainly influenced, Bonington, who, however, died too young to have seen the Frenchman in his technical maturity; they were fellow-pupils of Gros and staunch friends.

Looking at Delacroix purely from the standpoint of his merits as an artist, one would hardly suspect the enormous influence he has had upon the development of much that is good in subsequent art; for it cannot be denied that even in his best work one feels the presence of theatricality, of effort, of lack of concentration, of preoccupation about other things than the simple transmission of emotion; and this diminishes his claim to be in the first flight even of modern artists. As often happens in similar cases, his whole-hearted enthusiasm for Rubens resulted in the appropriation of the few defects of that great artist. For example, in Ruben's "Kermesse," in the Louvre, in spite of an admirable sense of movement, there is a lack of unity, of cohesive composition; Delacroix manifests the same fault in his probably finest works, the pictures in the church of St. Sulpice in Paris. It is rather as a reformer, as a brilliant experimenter, and as one of the potent influences in the development of modern painting that his place in art will ulti-

mately be fixed. It is interesting to note that with the exception of Corot he had but little sympathy with the men of 1830. The great art of Millet left him unmoved; he called his peasants "ambitieux," showing that he failed to grasp that they were merely symbolical of their class. Millet, in portraying the seemingly apparent, is in reality intensely profound, and one is hardly surprised that the monumental profundity of Millet failed to awaken the responsiveness of Delacroix.

In the struggle the romanticists triumphed all along the line; a definite date for the defeat of the classical school can almost be fixed in the revolution of 1830. Prior to the accession of Louis Philippe all state recognition was given to the classicists: henceforth the romanticists received their share. Official recognition is rarely beneficial to any movement: it is, as often as not, the cause of creeping paralysis which ends in something worse than death, atrophy. But in the case of the romanticists, the youthful vigour of the movement was sufficient to counteract the evil of official patronage: it went on its way and prospered. Of the opposing school, Ingres alone pursued his course unruffled by the success of what in his eyes must have seemed a riot of

anarchy. But he was a great man and one who could rise above prejudice ; it is said that he even supported Manet before a Salon jury. If there had been other painters of his calibre in the ranks of the classicists, the story of the struggle might have been different.

XII

Till early in the nineteenth century the transmission of emotion by painting was effected by strict adherence to outline, colour, and chiaroscuro or light and shade. Outline was consciously or unconsciously regarded as of supreme importance ; drawing was taught in every academy, and lack of ability in that art was an insurmountable barrier to a career as an artist. This was undermined by two English painters—Constable and Turner.

The former of these, Constable, struggling for natural effect, picked out what was of chief importance and made all else subservient to this ; particularly is this noticeable in his oil sketches from Nature. To achieve his end, he was less observant than his predecessors of the old-fashioned adhesion to outline. At the same time, to fully

realize natural effect, he gradually keyed up his scheme of colour to the verge of crudity, and in some of the scenes representing storms, particularly where a rainbow is introduced, he juxtaposed strong and brilliant colours with a confidence that to his contemporaries must have seemed audacity itself: these are the two qualities in his work which so appealed to the French school of 1830. Then came Turner; and no one could have thought that he would develop into a wizard-like explorer into the infinite realms of the mystery of light, coming as he did from the studio of Reynolds, and being, as he was, in his early water-colour days practically a topographer.

In his early years, after leaving Reynolds, Turner came under the influence of Ruisdael, who taught him to love literal truth to nature and the poetry of sombre light; thence sprang those magnificent examples of his early maturity, such as the "English Packet entering Dover Harbour" and "The Shipwreck," paintings low in key, vigorous in execution, full of solemn awe at the great and moving in Nature. He next came under the spell of Claude, and for many years endeavoured to put into practice the principles of that great painter, whom he strove not only to equal but to surpass. And the moment came when he con-

sidered that he need no longer fear comparison : of this the fact that he left the " Dido building Carthage " and the " Sun Rising in a Mist " to the National Gallery to be hung between two superb Claudes is sufficient proof. From that time onward Turner felt that he had learnt all that his predecessors could teach him, and that henceforth he was to work out his own ideas unfettered by tradition or fashion.

Light, in all its phases, became an obsession with him. His great endeavour was to make his colour scheme as consonant with nature as possible ; and his future works were one long series of experiments. He realized that pure white paint could never express white light, and that beyond pure white no man can go in paint. And for thirty years, from 1820 till his death in 1851, he was absorbed by this problem of the representation of light.

He soon found, as Constable had done, that fluidity was indispensable, and to arrive at this, first an attenuation, then an almost entire suppression of outline was adopted. The throwing over of all unessential detail marked another stage towards his goal. Subject began to have very little importance for him ; though in suppressing it, as he did gradually, he never sacrificed

composition, recognizing that this would leave the work incohesive and incoherent; his utter contempt for subject in his maturer years render his works admirable instances of the truth that subject is foreign to the real purport of supreme art. Turner's ideals were light and harmony.

Ruskin's championship was of incalculable service to the artist during his lifetime, forcing, as it did, the public first to consider his work and then to be convinced by it—though why they were, but few of them perhaps knew, for they certainly could not appreciate the real merits of Turner through Ruskin's interpretation.

And here perhaps a word may be allowed in regard to Ruskin's influence. As a critic he certainly did more to stimulate interest in art than any other man of his generation; the result of his championship of the best phases of Italian art, of the Pre-Raphaelites, of Turner, of Gothic art, are striking instances of his influence for good. But in spite of the brilliancy and enthusiasm of his advocacy, it is doubtful whether he himself was susceptible to the real appeal of great art. The examples of Gothic architecture he selected for praise, those in regard to which he was lukewarm if not depreciatory, his championship of such a mediocrity as Hunt, the water-colour

painter, his lack of appreciation for Ruisdael and Cuyp, are all evidence of something more than an ill-balanced judgment. In seeking for a message, a purport in art, he showed that he had mistaken its fundamental principles.

But Turner pursued his meteoric and experimental career, unmoved by either the support of Ruskin or the abuse showered upon him from other quarters. He had problems to solve; as to his success he was his own judge. With the technique of a virtuoso at his command, he was free from those fetters which bind even great men who have incomplete mastery of the means of expression, and so hampered are unable to realize their dreams. Turner in practice anticipated Chevreul's theory of light which was published in 1839. It is doubtful whether he was at all influenced by the scientific investigation of the problem of light going on around him: he had, certainly, achieved his life-work before those investigations resulted in the formulation of theory. To possible influence of another kind, that of the technique of the French painter Delacroix, he may, as had already been suggested, have been indebted.

It is unnecessary here to enter into a chronological study of his development. It will suffice

to quote a few of the more patent evidences of this pursuit of light as a means of expressing his emotion : " The Shipwreck," " English Packet entering Calais Harbour," " The Frosty Morning," " Spithead Ship's Crew recovering an Anchor," " The Evening Star," " Hannibal crossing the Alps," " Wreck off Hastings," " Stranded Vessel off Yarmouth," " Bligh Sand," " Petworth Park," " Sun Rising in a Mist," " The Evening Star," " Ulysses deriding Polyphemus," " Rain, Steam and Speed," " Queen Mab's Grotto," " The Approach to Venice " will more than suffice.

Turner, as is the case with every genius, produced, when in an uninspired mood and when limited by topographical or other considerations, works far from satisfactory from an artistic point of view—one need but refer to " The Grand Canal, Venice," the " St. Michael's Mount " and many of the classical subjects produced between 1810 and 1830 ; they have all points of merit, of great merit, and are consummately scientific as far as technique is concerned, but their infective power is small. One feels instinctively that they are only splendid failures ; that Turner had in these particular instances either not reached the maximum of inspiration, or that, if he had, in the struggle to present it he had overshot the mark.

The problems which confronted the early Florentines were geometrical and anatomical—perspective and foreshortening on the one hand, the truthful representation of the human body on the other. At these, they and their successors worked assiduously, and that they surmounted their difficulties Michelangelo testifies in his works. The Venetians concerned themselves with colour, and are the despair of all who followed. The Milanese Leonardo and Correggio of Parma successfully dealt with another problem, that of dealing with light and shade. It remained for the artists of the nineteenth century to grapple with the whole problem of light ; and, as we have seen, Turner was among the first in the field. The problems in which he was absorbed were quite beyond the range of any British artist among his contemporaries ; if any of them possessed sufficient insight to grasp the idea of what Turner was striving for, they were quite incapable of following up the task from the point where he laid it down. This was left to the French. For the last half-century they have concerned themselves with the problem of light. If it is too early in the day to form a final judgment as to the measure of their success, one thing is certain : they have done not a little to change the technique of painting.

The modern French painters cannot be set aside ; they must be dealt with now. If there should be any inclination to think that too much space is devoted to men and theories whose ultimate fate is still in the balance, it must be borne in mind that, beyond doubt, the problem of light is the toughest the painter has encountered during the last three centuries ; the understanding of their aims and their methods is of vital importance to any one whose interest in art is living and not merely archæological.

XIII

In the middle of the nineteenth century there began, in the art world of France, a revolt against the established and official school ; a search for realism. This was purely a domestic affair ; there had been no lack of realists elsewhere. Rembrandt was a realist ; so were Velasquez and Goya. But in France the new departure was looked at askance ; for the French, intellectual and logical as they are, delight in being governed by rule and in following a master or a system. In spite, however, of official disapprobation, the movement went on, and the world owes to those French artists a debt of gratitude for bringing realism to the

fore again. But realism was not their only aim ; they struggled too with the problems of light, sharing in a movement which began with Velasquez and had already been carried far by Turner.

Turner stands out prominently as the one who influenced the later French painters—those who are known as impressionists and their immediate precursors. Velasquez, perhaps, is not so generally associated with the movement, but from his early Sevillian days when, under the guidance of his father-in-law Pachecho, he was painting his *bodegones*, to the time of his full maturity, he wrestled with the problems of light and solved them without any interference with his dazzling technique. And here it will not be amiss to refer to another Spaniard—that very unequal artist Goya, who, a century or so later, followed Velasquez in the treatment of light, though he differed from the older master in character, for with Goya the inspiration of the character or subject itself provoked the response ; whilst Velasquez found his interest not only in the character, but in the problems which surrounded it, the light, the setting.

Among the French realists one man in especial, Claude Monet, strove hard to deal with light, and, what was really the same thing, colour prob-

lem, and to found a new technique. Monet and his followers became known by the name of impressionists ; but that name is not confined to them, it is applied to realists who never adopted the impressionist technique. Indeed one of the latter group, Manet, a friend of Monet and some years his senior, is commonly regarded as the chief of the impressionists, a fact probably due to his having borne the brunt of the attack made by the official school on the new workers. But at its best the term " impressionism " is as loose as is " Pre-Raphaelitism." Brown sought for the sincerity, the absolute truth, the unconsciousness and naïveness of representation found in the work of the better Italian precursors of Raphael. He *was* a Pre-Raphaelite, but it is only by stretching the meaning of the word that Rossetti or Millais, even in his early phase, can be included, though both are generally known as Pre-Raphaelites. And it certainly cannot be said that the greater number of their followers and hangers-on showed signs of sincerity, truth, unconsciousness and naïveness ; yet they too are styled Pre-Raphaelites. And it is the same with the " impressionists " : the term includes many painters whose aims and methods differ considerably. Such designations have been, not inappropriately, called

“ battle-cries ” ; and there is no little truth in the remark that most “ isms ” are “ the coinage of minds at fault.”

Impressionists strive first of all to reproduce the real, an aim which they share with many who are not impressionists ; all impressionists are realists, but all realists are not impressionists. Next, they have striven to solve the mystery of light, “ to give to colour the greatest luminosity and effect ” ; they are, above all things, colourists. Thirdly, they try “ to seize some instantaneous aspect of life and faithfully to reproduce that vivid impression as distinct from this or that detail or series of details,” to once more quote from the same lucid writer, Mr. McColl, whose words, for terse accuracy, cannot be improved upon. More will be said of their technique later on ; but now we had better turn our attention to the realists pure and simple.

The first for consideration is Courbet, born at Ornans in Burgundy in 1819, who in 1871, being then a communist, distinguished himself by being concerned in the pulling down of the column in the Place Vendôme ; an act of vandalism for which he was sentenced to fine and imprisonment, though it is said that he did it to divert the attention of the mob and thereby save the Louvre.

When he was twenty years of age he was sent to Paris to study law, which he soon abandoned for painting, and in 1844 he exhibited in the Salon. He revolted against the classical school which could see nothing beyond the art of Greece, Rome, and the Italian renaissance ; and with this against every element in painting which was literary, symbolical, or psychological. He went straight to Nature for his inspiration and throughout his life painted in the most direct and literal manner ; so energetic was his mode of approach that he was not infrequently brutal. Courbet was never an absolute master of expression, his vision was too limited for the emotional needs of his temperament. In his work, too, an absolute objectiveness will be noticed, and to this an intense striving for grandeur was frequently added and his aim was not seldom realized. The importance of Courbet in the development of certain important phases in modern art can hardly be overstated. He will always be regarded as one of the chiefs, if not the chief, of the French realist school ; although again, as was the case with Delacroix, he is far greater as an influence than as an artist—great as he undoubtedly was.

The next for consideration is Manet, who owed much to Courbet. He was born in 1832 ; in

due course he became a pupil of Couture, a painter who, in spite of his not having abandoned the classical tradition, had pronounced leanings towards the romantic school headed by Delacroix ; his innate conservatism hindered him from playing any notable part in the movement then in progress. After a certain stage, Couture's teaching failed to satisfy Manet, who left him and continued his studies in Munich, Dresden, Cassel, Vienna, Venice, Florence and Rome. It was, however, only when he came into contact with the Spaniards—Velasquez and Goya—that he saw that he could strike out on new lines. He fully appreciated Goya and was to some extent influenced by him ; but he found Velasquez more consistently scientific and deliberate in expression and to him he turned as his model. He adopted a system of lighting which had the effect of simplifying and broadening the effect of light, producing flat masses and consequently reducing chiaroscuro to a minimum, in some cases almost entirely suppressing it ; these effects were produced by the light falling directly on his figures instead of coming from the side. He also made free use, as Velasquez had done, of greys and blacks. A study of Japanese colour prints confirmed him in his technique, for in them he found that effects were produced by somewhat similar

means. In 1861 he exhibited in the Salon and one of his paintings, the "Guitarero," was rewarded by the jury. Later he was refused admittance, probably because of his "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe," in which a nude woman was shown amidst dressed figures. Manet's reputation was established by 1865; his "Olympia" forcing to a head the discussion raised by his work. He was now a recognized innovator; and was attacked for his realism, for his modernity, for his technique, for the simplifying, that is, of planes and values. And this, it must be noted, was years before impressionism rightly so-called existed. At this time Manet was a good colourist, his design and technique were masterly; he was superior in technical equipment but not in profundity to Courbet and the heir of Goya and Velasquez. By 1870 the time had come for expansion; he was then irresistibly attracted by the problem of light, which had been the great preoccupation of his friend Monet, but he never adopted the latter's technique; only in certain exceptional cases in landscape does he make any approach to "decomposition of tone," which is Monet's characteristic feature. On this point, the question, that is, of light, he determined to once more fight official art, and to endeavour to force its adherents to imbibe some

new ideas. In 1875 he submitted his "Argenteuil," which Maclair describes as "the most perfect epitome of his atmospheric researches"; in spite of protest, the jury accepted it—they feared Manet. In 1876 they rejected him, and then, as he had done once before, he opened his studio to the public. In 1877 he was admitted, as he was in the four following years, in the last of which, 1881, he received a medal from the Salon and the Cross of the Legion of Honour from the Minister of Fine Arts, his old friend, Antonin Prouet. He died in 1883. Manet was a genius who has left an indelible mark on French art, and not on French art only: it is the exception rather than the rule to find a painter in any country who has not come under the influence either of himself or of the movement which but for him would probably have died unknown.

XIV

Manet had a powerful influence on two other painters, Degas and the American Whistler; and to some extent he is responsible for the development of Cezanne and Renoir, but these two had better be left for the moment.

Degas, a Parisian, born in 1834, worked in oil and

in pastel. His draughtsmanship was excellent, and when one examines his drawings one wonders at the charge of indifferent draughtsmanship which was made against the early impressionists ; for though Degas was the master in this respect, the rest did not lag far behind. But he was not only a great draughtsman ; the originality of his outlook on life, combined with his mode of approaching his subjects, raised him to high rank as an artist. His subjects are for the most part taken from the theatre ; supreme problems in drawing and in lighting are the dominant features, and it would not be beyond bounds to say that in regard to them nobody has had greater success than he.

James McNeill Whistler was a native of the state of Massachusetts ; in 1857, being then twenty-three years of age and two years junior to Manet, he came to Paris to study painting. He developed on similar lines to Manet, and, like him, felt the dominating influence of Velasquez and the Japanese, though with him the resulting effect was somewhat different. Whistler's aim being beauty of form, arrangement and subdued colour, he leant more towards the Japanese than did Manet, whose striving for a masculine solidity of presentation and realization led him to ignore those delicately sensitive and alluring features

which make Whistler's works so charming. But Whistler did not confine himself to paintings of this description ; he was also a portrait painter and an etcher. Of his portraits the most famous are those of his mother painted in 1870 and purchased for the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris some twenty years later ; that of Thomas Carlyle which was acquired by the city of Glasgow in 1891 ; those of the Worcester (Mass.) and Pittsburg museums, and that of Miss Alexander, perhaps the finest of them all.

XV

We have now to deal with Monet, a Parisian, born in 1840, eight years after Manet. He was the real founder of chromatism, which is really a more appropriate term than impressionism. Though universal in his art, his predilection was for landscape and sea pieces ; his treatment of the Seine and the neighbourhood of Paris is admirable. In 1870, when France was in the throes of the war with Prussia, Monet came to London with Pissarro, a painter friend whose name is indissolubly bound up with his own as a pioneer of the new movement. In London they were brought into contact with Turner's works, and

appreciated the fact that the English painter had in many ways realized the solution of the chromatic problems which had agitated artistic France from the time of Delacroix. The gradual keying up of Turner's colour scheme when he shook off in a measure the influence of Claude (or, as Turner himself believed, had outclassed him) and his exclusive absorption in the problems of light came as a revelation of intuitive perception. Monet determined to follow up Turner's work and to create a new technique, to construct a sound and far-reaching mode of transmitting emotion. All that he realized at first was that he had to probe certain aspects of the light problem with which the question of colour was indissolubly involved: as time went on, other valuable principles were evolved. The chief outcome of his investigations was the spectral palate, the employment in painting of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, with the addition of black and white and nothing else—not perhaps altogether logical, for if anything more than the three primary colours be taken, why limit oneself to seven? The first idea was not to mix these colours upon the palette but to place them in juxtaposition on the canvas, the artist relying on the blending of the reflected rays to produce at a certain dis-

tance the desired effect upon the spectator—a method technically styled the “decomposition of tone.”

The impressionists in practice *did* mix the colours. It was left to the neo-impressionists, as will be described later, to carry the principles of impressionism nearer their original entirety and limit themselves to juxtaposing in their purity these colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

Monet's technique has been well and tersely summed up by M. Mauclair as follows: “suppression of local colour, study of reflections by means of complementary colours and division of tones by the process of touches of pure juxtaposed colours.” One expression here requires explanation—“process of touches,” and that is admirably done in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by Mr. D. S. MacColl, who writes as follows:

“In fully developed modern painting, instead of an object analysed into sharp outlines covered with a uniform colour darkened or lightened in places, we find an object analysed into a number of surfaces or planes set at different angles. On each of these facets the character of the object and of the illumination, with accidents of reflection, produces a patch called by modern painters a ‘value’ because it is a colour of a particular value or tone, tone being conceived as black or white added to the tints. These planes or facets define themselves one against another with greater or less

sharpness. Modern technique follows this modern analysis of vision and in one act, instead of three, renders by a 'touch' of paint the shape and value of these facets, and instead of imposing a uniform ideal outline at all their junctions allows these patches to define themselves against one another with variable sharpness."

Monet, in fact, worked out practically the results of the scientific investigations of Chevreul, Young and Helmholtz : but he had no predilection himself for theoretical studies.

XVI

Two names stand out among the adherents of Monet—those of Pissarro and Sisley : a third painter, August Renoir, owes his earlier development to the joint influence of Courbet and Manet on the one hand and the chromatists on the other.

Pissarro has already been mentioned in connexion with Monet's visit to London in 1870 ; he was a landscape painter who delighted in simple and unaggressive French scenery ; though more unequal than Monet in his work, a really inspired canvas from his brush is a great work, the very portrayal of the soul of France.

Sisley, another landscape painter, drew his inspiration from the Seine and its tributaries. He was a passionate admirer of Nature in all her

moods and during his short life produced a number of canvases of the first order.

Sisley was unequal. At his best he is perhaps the most temperamentally gifted of the impressionists with the exception of Renoir. There is less evidence in his work of the fettering influence of a scientific formula, whilst unconsciously he was enormously aided by it.

It may be ultimately decided that Sisley and Pissarro in that order are the greatest of the French impressionists until we come to Renoir, with whom, however, they cannot be compared, as the latter strove to resolve problems that Sisley and Pissarro never attacked and relied upon the varying quality of shade for his effects, a factor that does not seem to have entered into the calculations of the other two.

Renoir began by painting in the early 'sixties upon the lines suggested by Courbet ; his work of this period shows a sober and thoughtful attitude towards the problems which were engrossing the attention of Manet. Then in the early seventies the developments brought about by his own and Manet's endeavours on the one hand and the experiments of Monet on the other, began to make their influence felt. Being already master of the play of light upon the selected

objects, he worked at the question of shadow to which he thought sufficient attention had not been paid. Shadow had been more or less conventionally treated, and if the result had been happy, it was due more to chance or intuition on the part of the artist than to any scientific reason. Renoir was a sturdy opponent of the idea, as practised by even some of the greatest old masters, that shadow was ever opaque; shadow he held to be a more or less relative term, but one which always implied limpidity.

Acting upon these ideas he painted a wonderful series of canvases—nudes, portraits and intimate subjects drawn from indoor and outdoor life and landscapes. Even later in his career, with other problems engrossing him, these are the dominant characteristics of his art. Few painters have realized an ideal better than he. He caught, in a marvellous manner, the effect of enveloping atmosphere upon human flesh in imparting rotundity. His landscapes are the supreme realization of the scintillating limpidity of atmosphere; in transferring to canvas the emotions engendered in him by a contemplation of nature, he seems oblivious of the means employed. The objects look as if blown upon the canvas rather than painted. And the same features are to be noticed in his



Musée du Luxembourg, Paris

LE MOULIN DE LA GALETTE
Renoir.

Photo. E. Druet, Paris.

treatment of the popular life of the French metropolis. No one with any intimate knowledge of Parisian life, can fail to be carried away by the irresistible appeal of his "Moulin de la Galette," of which a version exists in the Luxembourg; the sparkle of the spring atmosphere, the *joie de vivre* of the assembled crowd, the whirl of the music, the clinking of the glasses, the light-heartedness, the French spontaneity of the whole scene.

Renoir went from triumph to triumph in this mood; and then felt that other problems waited solution. The means of expressing emotion was still too complicated. How could it be simplified? He became a post-impressionist. Not that any sudden change can be observed in his art. There is no sharp line of demarcation between the two periods; on the contrary, as might be anticipated, the revolutionary process was slow.

To these names must be added that of Toulouse-Lautrec, a draughtsman who took his subjects from the vicious side of Montmartre life and in this domain is unrivalled. Toulouse-Lautrec is a type of artist whose creative impulses are stimulated by degrading subjects; it may be said that the artistic worth of his gouaches increases directly with the unhealthy nature of scene and model.

As a draughtsman he is of the first order.

The early impressionists were treated with scant respect by the artists trained in the old school ; the acute feeling may have been to some extent due to the new men themselves, who often, by their choice of subjects and model, must have seemed to the others as gratuitously and deliberately doing all they could to outrage the generally received artistic proprieties, much as an ill-conditioned youth, just emerging from boyhood and subjection, may, to assert his budding manhood, deliberately outrage every conviction or wish of his seniors. But their principles have now conquered the official academies—though, needless to say, it is only the impressionistic technique, with its adaptability to pyrotechnics, that has taken root ; the power it supplied of screening thinness or absence of emotion behind a smoke screen of technical accomplishment has been fully appreciated and seized upon.

XVII

After impressionism, neo-impressionism. This can be traced back to the year 1880 or thereabouts. The early impressionists were more concerned with art than science, with practice than theory.

But while they were working at their art, men of science, Helmholtz, and others, were working at the theory of light and colour, and the results of their investigations had considerable influence on a group of the younger impressionists, with the result that they set about the creation of a technique directly founded on ascertained scientific principles. Seurat and Signac were the leaders of the quest which resulted in the method of *pointillism*; the application of paint in the so-called primary colours to the canvas not in patches but in dots or squares, so placed that, at a certain distance from the painting, the spectator was only cognizant of a harmonious whole, the by-fusing dots disappearing on account of the incapacity of the eye to perceive the intervening spaces. The neo-impressionist first makes a sketch in which he gathers up directly from nature the fundamental relation of tones, and then proceeds to weld these together. In this way, according to his theory, a more literal fidelity to nature is attained than can be the case when a painter relies upon his intuitive capacity for selection. But this mathematical method of work induces in any but the most competent hands a sense of labour and effort, a want of elasticity and responsiveness in place of spontaneity and free-

dom which is the essence of great art ; the higher qualities of imagination are stifled in the quest of absolute fidelity and to the spectator the effect of the rigidity, lifelessness, and the restriction of outlook, which of necessity result, is arid and irksome.

Pointillism, with the exception of its two great original exponents—Seurat and Signac—is to all intents and purposes dead.

These two men have exhausted its possibilities. Their achievement remains nevertheless supreme. In thus pushing the scientific principles of impressionism to its logical and extreme conclusion, both were too emotionally gifted to be unduly fettered with the limitations of the neo-impressionist technique. Both are most probably destined to live as the great exponents of the last phase of a movement in painting which has dominated the last decade of the nineteenth century, and is still a powerful though slowly diminishing influence.

But quite outside the technical method of their expression, these two men—Seurat for his wonderful composition, invention and sense of volume and mass, Signac for his cohesive unity and splendour of form and colour, particularly when working in water-colour—will always be accorded a high rank in modern art.

Another group which was formed from the impressionists became known as the "intimists." They accepted the technique of the impressionists and utilized it, in a charming manner, to portray the more intimate side of life ; hence their name. Theirs was but a " *petit art* " in comparison with the majestic art of Manet and Renoir. Henri Le Sidaner was the leading member of the group.

Mention must here be made of Bonnard and Vuillard, both artists of considerable worth, who, working upon impressionist lines, have produced numerous works of lasting beauty and import.

XVIII

As neo-impressionism followed impressionism, so it, in its turn, was followed by post-impressionism—a protest against the growing worship of mere skill in representation. Those who had profited by the teaching of the impressionists soon found that, even if they themselves were paupers in emotion, impressionism was an admirable screen to their poverty, and that the production of works of superficial brilliance was a matter of no great difficulty. From such as these the ideas of the post-impressionists met with violent

opposition, as remorseless as that offered to the early impressionists.

To three of these post-impressionists, Cezanne, Gauguin and the Dutchman van Gogh, the last phase of modern painting owes its existence. They had all taken part in the impressionist movement, and the benefits received from this early training made possible the second and more important phase of their development. In their intense desire to change the whole attitude of the painter towards his object, they were assisted by the study of Oriental paintings and miniatures. Just as Manet had been aided by the Japanese colour prints, in his management of planes, so Cezanne and those who were working beside him were profoundly impressed by early Indian and Persian miniatures and by the paintings of China and Japan. The earlier and finer examples of Oriental art were now steadily coming to Europe. Whereas Manet, Whistler and the early impressionists had only the later, more technically accomplished and consequently more obvious works of the Orient before their eyes, the post-impressionist had now the immense advantage of seeing those of infinitely greater and further removed epochs.

The Kien Lung, Kang He and Ming in Chinese, the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Indian

and Japanese, which had so rejoiced the heart of the earlier artists, were being dethroned by the magnificent examples of Yuan, Sung, Tang and earlier dynasties. By these they were convinced that the objective attitude which impressionism had brought about, and upon which, as it progressed, it more and more insisted, could not be maintained.

Cezanne, the son of a banker, was born in 1839 at Aix-en-Provence; he was originally destined for a legal career, but this proving distasteful, his desire to make painting his profession was acceded to. He failed in his primary examination at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, a fact which so annoyed his father that he had for the time to abandon art. He next worked in his father's bank, but this was an impossible career. After a time he returned to Paris, where he met Pissarro and Monet. The former, who retained much of the great tradition of Millet, profoundly influenced his outlook upon life; and from Monet he acquired the impressionist technique. Cezanne's early pictures are, in consequence, quite impressionist in treatment and outlook. He painted out of doors, a practice which he maintained during the whole of his life.

Cezanne soon found himself amongst those who had serious doubts as to the tendencies which

had sprung from the early impressionist movement. He became convinced that impressionism as practised by its innumerable later votaries had become symbolical of, and synonymous with the materialistic social system of the modern world. With its superficial brilliance, its absence of compelling motive, its bravado and self-assertiveness, its want of modesty and purposeful intent, the later phases of impressionism had become a cancer eating into the vitals of art. One thing was clear to him : in the pursuit of light, to the exclusion of all else, the impressionists were absorbed in recording, simply and absolutely, the impression made on the eye, and a reform could only come about by the painter seeking to record on his canvas the emotion that an object had evoked in himself. It is of the highest importance that this should be grasped ; for the greater part of the development of painting is its outcome. Cezanne saw that in this way the artist becomes the master of his subject and not the subject master of him ; further, that a much higher appeal could be called into being, for the impressionist's vista was confined to the object, but the post-impressionist would only be limited by his æsthetic capacity. The post-impressionist's art was to bear much the same rela-



Photo E. Druet, Paris.

PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER
Cézanne.

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tion to that of the impressionist as poetry does to prose.

Various influences worked upon Cezanne before he arrived at that highly developed means of expression which he adopted in his later time. It was the influence of Theotocopoulos, commonly called El Greco, that finally brought his technique to definite shape.

Theotocopoulos was a Cretan, born between 1545-50, who studied in Venice. He became a pupil of Titian, but he did not adopt his master's manner; in the earlier phases of his career he is nearer to Tintoretto and Bassano than any other Venetian painter. About the year 1575 he went to Spain, and remained there for the rest of his life, just under forty years, living in Toledo, where many of his finest pictures still remain. He developed an intensely original manner; his works breathe the very soul of old Castile; full of mordant melancholy and supremely rendered, they are frequently visionary to the verge of uncanniness.

As time went on, El Greco became engrossed with the problems of light; everything else was subordinated to this study. The seemingly extraordinary contortions and drawings of his figures, (it has been said that he suffered from astigmatism),

from which originated, perhaps, the untrue story that he went mad towards the end of his life, were the outcome of this centralized preoccupation. Finally he reached a point at which he was contemptuous of conventional laws ; and a painter who adopts this attitude must have unlimited confidence in his own capacity.

In some of his works the light is so distributed that seemingly insoluble difficulties were imposed, whilst in others it is gathered up and falls with dramatic effect upon one or two spots, throwing the rest of the composition into darkness of varying intensity ; and his planes are so utilized that perspective is suggested rather than indicated. These results were made possible by a system of colour fusion, peculiar to him ; by the employment of which he was enabled to obtain subtle modulation of shadow effect.

It was this later and highly developed side of El Greco's art that so appealed to Cezanne ; who had found that after a certain point, the impressionist method entailed restriction of expression. In rendering as faithfully and literally as possible the effect of light upon objects by means of selected planes, an adequate sense of volume, height and depth was produced. The eye is so accustomed to the impressionist formula that the imagination



Photo. Mansell.

Church of San Tome, Toledo

THE INTERMENT OF COUNT D'ORGAZ

El Greco.

comes automatically into play in filling up gaps—thus, in painting a ball, an impressionist indicates its roundness by a judicious employment of significant planes ; this, however, would be inadequate if we did not know from experience that a ball is round so that our imagination unconsciously supplies what has been omitted.

Cezanne strove to find a greater measure of volume, depth and height than the impressionists had achieved. He chose the architectural essentials of a composition, ruthlessly eliminating superfluous and diluting detail, reverting thus to primitive art. This radical change in the form of expression makes the works of Cezanne and his followers strange to our eyes ; we are so accustomed to the complicated European art of the last five centuries that we are unprepared for simple enunciation ; but if we could view these works with the eyes of an intelligent savage, we should probably experience no shock. This process of unloading the dead weight of unnecessary representation, the accumulation of centuries, is by no means easy ; the sincerest men of the present day have, however, gone far on the road.

In Aix, far away from the distracting influences of Paris, Cezanne continued to work, unheeded, save by a few intimate friends. He was so ab-

sorbed in the problems of painting that he regarded his pictures more in the nature of incomplete exercises, stepping-stones on a difficult road, than as complete works. His interest in a painting ended directly it was finished. He would leave it in the fields or wherever he chanced to be ; and if his wife had not gathered them up, the majority would have perished.

The second of the trio, Gauguin, was born in 1848, his father being a Breton and his mother a Peruvian Creole. At the age of fourteen he ran away to sea and made several journeys round the world. Afterwards he had a position in a Paris bank ; but when he was about thirty years of age he took to painting, with Guillaumin and Pissarro as his teachers.

His desire to paint was combined with disgust for the ultra-civilized world in which he was living ; a disgust which, dormant during the period of his employment in the bank, now strongly asserted itself. He went to Brittany and threw himself into simple peasant life. His new surroundings, however, did not satisfy his ideals, the colour scheme was not sufficiently polychromatic, the peasant had civilized traits which revealed themselves upon closer contact ; and finally, from some cause or other, quarrels became frequent. He

went to Martinique, and remained there a year, turning out studies that mark a considerable advance upon his Breton manner. Returning to Paris, he met Van Gogh and was persuaded to collaborate with him. The alliance did not last long; Van Gogh's insanity asserted itself so violently that he had to be placed in an asylum.

Gauguin then tried Brittany once more; but the second attempt to find what he wanted on French soil was as unsuccessful as the first. He next spent a couple of years in Tahiti, returned to Paris to exhibit his pictures, then, disgusted at his failure, went back to Tahiti and died.

Gauguin had much the same end in view as Cezanne, but he reached it by a rather different route. His early pictures—the first and second Breton manner and those painted in Martinique—beautiful as they are, would not have sufficed to give him the place he occupies in modern art. It is from the Tahitian pictures alone that we can form a fair estimate of his talent. In these, austerity of line, jewel-like splendour of colour, and expression of mass and volume reach the culminating point. He purposely chose a decorative form of representation, stimulated by the full-blooded life he saw around him. His best works closely resemble gorgeous tapestries, in which all irre-

levant detail is either suppressed or so interwoven with the ground work that it serves to accentuate the dignity of the main theme.

The Dutchman, Van Gogh, was born in 1853. His sister had married the painter Anton Mauve, to whom, when Van Gogh began to paint, he went for instruction. He did not stay long with Mauve, but passed on to the Antwerp academy. Later he went to Paris, and there absorbed impressionist principles from Gauguin and Pissarro and neo-impressionist principles from Seurat, but he made them subserve his ends in a way that but few impressionists had done ; with him painting was a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Paris had no more attraction for him than for Gauguin. He went to Arles, in Provence, and there, amidst scenes of great natural beauty, painted his finest works.

The works of his early period, when under the influence of Mauve and Antwerp, are more or less conventional in outlook but had sufficient claim for consideration even if he had developed no farther ; it is, however, by the works executed at Arles that he must be judged. In these his impetuosity and power of perception were given full rein.

His art is strange, perhaps repulsive upon first

contact, but not more so than the products of other novel phases. There is an incisive quality about his portrayal, verging on the brutal, which is painful until we realize that it is the outcome of intensity, concisely expressed; his colour scheme harmonized with the scenes which surrounded him. He became essentially French in his outlook; no evidence was left of his Dutch nationality. He was one of the sincerest artists of the nineteenth century. Much has been made of the fact that he ended his days insane; the inference being that his artistic productions were the ravings of a madman. Nothing could be further from the truth or more cruelly unjust. There was no hereditary taint, and his derangement was probably due to intense mental application to one problem exclusively; the evil result of this being aggravated, it is said, by his habit of painting hatless under the fierce southern sun.

It is a curious coincidence that these three men who have had so great an influence on contemporary art, should have deliberately sought solitude. Cezanne retired to Aix, Van Gogh to Arles, and Gauguin, finding Brittany insufficient for his purpose, to Tahiti.

They were not only tired of modern art, with its scientific theories, but were, also, hopelessly

out of touch with the conditions of modern life. Their imaginations had been fixed by contemplation, not only of primitive art, European and oriental, produced under infinitely higher idealistic conditions, but also by the pathetically vital and naïve art of Africa, South America and other regions, where art and life were, to the greatest possible extent, synonymous terms. They were sick of the fatal restrictions that modern conventions placed upon their life and with it, their art, which they yearned to make its supreme interpretation: and it is only by grasping this that we can realize the seriousness of their art. It explains, for instance, the aloofness and austerity of Cezanne's pictures.

XIX

The impressionists worked out the problem of light practically; the neo-impressionists worked under rules based on scientific theory; the post-impressionists led by Cezanne, revolting against the restrictions imposed by theory, sought to increase the power of painting as a vehicle of transmitting emotion. Then came the "cubist."

Among the young artists who came under Cezanne's spell, were a number who endeavoured

to follow his ideas to their logical conclusion. They wished to suggest cubic volume. Hence their name.

They had but little sympathy with impressionism. They admitted that the colour of one object affected all others in its vicinity ; they urged, however, that its form, which itself depends upon light for its revelation, was similarly affected. That is, they combatted the impressionists' contention that form was perfectly rendered by means of colour.

The cubists accordingly proceeded to place upon the canvas selected aspects in addition to the one visible to the eye at a given angle. But space on a canvas is limited and so to avoid overlapping and consequent incoherence, only such portion of each selected aspect is placed on it as, in the judgment of the painter, is essential. Thus in a portrait, some portion of the face may be carried out as the eye sees it and the remainder occupied by a representation of the head in profile and other aspects ; the object being to impart as perfect an idea of the head, its volume and substance, in all its aspects as possible. A stationary eye should have as adequate a comprehension conveyed to it as that received by many eyes placed at different angles.

This method naturally presents complexities to an eye accustomed to conventional representation ; it assumes that the selected forms will have the same value and emotional significance to both creator and spectator. And the cubist has to meet practical difficulties in the employment of this method of transmitting emotion. The accumulation of the selected planes upon the canvas, even when employed with economy, imposes a strain upon the eye ; and if the whole surface were to be exploited in this way, the comprehension of a work of art would resolve itself into the capacity of the mind for absorption. To obviate this, the cubist employs what he calls restful spaces between patches of intense and essential import ; and as the work might still be enigmatical it is urged that the fact that a work is well painted is one evidence of its artistic worth, for the art of painting well is in a degree the outcome of emotion.

Further value is rightly attached to the composition of the whole, the disposition of the shorthand notes as they may be called and the restful spaces and the knitting up of the whole into a harmonious, well disposed and well balanced *ensemble*.

The cubist does not insist upon the necessity of the third dimension, the majority of pure cubists

ignore it altogether. They claim that the development of the third dimension which has gone on since the fifteenth century in painting has set up a false standard in art.

The optical illusion it sets up upon a flat surface such as a picture, has debased taste and has, up to now from that time, set up almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of an artist who wishes to employ, in pictorial form, only two dimensions for his appeal.

Much can be said for this contention. Abstract appeal of vital import can be expressed by the use of but two dimensions. Numerous works of the European primitives, in a modified way, and splendid specimens of oriental painting are evidences of the truth of the cubists' argument in this respect.

There are a number of perfectly sincere painters who, being cubist by conviction, will probably continue to practise its principles; they are worthy of every respect.

There is another aspect of cubism which is hardly so well known as it deserves to be, namely the fact that many of the most serious and greatest modern painters have practised cubism in a more or less modified form during a considerable period and have now partially or wholly emerged from its

confines. The good the exercise has wrought upon them is manifest ; they have nearly all acquired a new sense of volume and mass, a realization of the soul of *matière* which, it is perhaps not going too far to say, they might never have possessed had they not passed by this phase. It has yet, probably, to be realized, what a serious movement cubism really is ; what a vital factor it will ultimately be considered in the logical development of the best painting ; and what the greatest modern art owes to it.

Cubism, considered from some points of view, is an attempt to place the plastic arts on the same level of abstract appeal as music. The danger to the cubist is that he might be engrossed more with the theory than the abstract and emotional possibilities of the formula. The more an artist concerns himself with logic, the less emotion he will transmit : logic and emotion are mutual diluents.

XX

The futurists claim that the adherents of cubism “ obstinately continued to paint objects motionless and frozen,” and that they had only a partial comprehension of the problem of art in its relation to modern life. They also urged that the fact

of the recipient of transmitted emotion being a spectator and not a participant was fatal. If an artist was moved to portray a riot, the spectator should not be held aloof from the fray. He should be made to take part in it. He should form part of the crowd, thus experiencing intimately its colour, its form, its movement and further the dust, the noise and the rage of the rioters. As one of their protagonists says, this may be conveyed by rendering "the dynamic sensation," that is to say the particular rhythm of each object, its inclination, its movement or to put it more exactly, its interior force."

The futurists, in the manifesto with which the movement was launched, cited an example of what could be accomplished :

In painting a person on a balcony, seen from inside the room, we do not limit the scene to what the square frame of the window renders visible ; but we try to render the sum total of visual sensations which the person on the balcony has experienced : the sun-bathed throng in the street, the double row of houses which stretch to right and left, the be-flowered balconies, etc. This implies the simultaneousness of the ambient, and, therefore, the dislocation and dismemberment of objects, the scattering and fusion of details, freed from accepted logic, and independent from one another. In order to make the spectator live in the centre of the picture, the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*.

They laid down as an unalterable article of their faith, that their subjects should be confined exclusively to actualities: the feverish agitation of contemporary life in all its aspects.

Here again, and the same might be urged against certain of the cubists rightly or wrongly, if the selected significant forms are not significant to the spectator, there is no infection and all is futile. If explanations are necessary, fundamentals are lacking; and that explanations are necessary is tacitly admitted by those futurist painters to whose works descriptive matter is supplied in their catalogues.

The futurists urge that the incomprehensibility of their works is a passing phase, that their audiences are restricted in their emotional responsiveness and perception, on account of constant contact with past art, which expresses itself by well worn and consequently well understood formulæ. They therefore think that it would be well to get rid of centres of contagion, by destroying all museums and libraries, and so obliterating all traces of obsolete formulæ to make way for the new, a suggestion which may perhaps be the result of a sub-conscious recollection of the work done at Alexandria by the Caliph Omar!

XXI

So far, in dealing with the modern movements, nothing has been said of painters who were not Frenchmen, with the exception of Whistler, Van Gogh and the Italian futurists. A word must now be said in regard to some others.

The influence of Courbet, Manet and Whistler was felt in Germany, where, with the exception of the work of a few portrait painters, who got their inspiration from England, nothing of any value had been done since the sixteenth century. The Germans recognized the possibilities of the new teaching ; and at Munich especially an effort was made to put it into practice. Their achievements, however, are not on the same level with those of the Frenchmen : they hardly bear comparison. The German artists were dexterous, thorough, plodding, energetic ; but their creations lack that elusive and indefinable quality which is the characteristic of true art. Moreover the movement soon lost its fervour and spontaneity. The teaching of its principles became confined to official professors—nothing else could be looked for in Germany as then constituted ; and these officials, being oblivious to the essence and purport of art, the transmission, that is, of emotional appeal,

placed such emphasis on the technique that the only outcome of a movement, which had promised well, was an outburst of unmeaning pyrotechnics.

Germany, however, has been one of the intelligent and open-minded countries in the appreciation of the best in pictorial art. With great acumen and initiative, it has been amongst the foremost nations to grasp the finest in ancient art and amongst the first to realize the vital importance of certain modern movements. So successful has it been in its acquisitions that a student is obliged to go to Germany to become acquainted with some of the most important collections of modern pictorial art. The good this undoubtedly accomplished might have had still more far-reaching effects if it had not been dominated by the professor and the intellectual, who has wielded his power in an autocratic fashion, and whose opinions few Germans dare to defy. One also wonders whether all their intellectuals possess truly emotional responsiveness to pictorial art, and whether their judgment is not purely analytical and logical. To create pictorial and plastic art of import, however, does not seem to be in the German character. It is in other domains that they are supreme.

Passing from Germany to Spain we find that

after the death of Goya in 1828, its painters too had contented themselves with brilliant trivialities or dull academic productions: but they felt the new influence.

In Belgium Henri de Brackeleer stands out prominently, and is an artist to be counted with in Belgian art: he has painted interiors and landscapes. Among Italian painters, Segantini may be mentioned, but here much of his appeal is derivative—Millet being his chief source of supply. But the influence of the French impressionists has been too extensive and too multiform for anything beyond a passing glance to be possible here.

XXII

Apart from these movements, impressionist, neo-impressionist, post-impressionist, cubist, futurist, there is but little to be said of the art and artists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though reference should, perhaps, be made to the still overrated Gustave Moreau, who, the antithesis of Courbet, mystical and often symbolical, endeavoured to express a complexity of ideas by means of paint, the only name of real importance is that of Puvis de Chavannes.

Puvis de Chavannes was a native of Lyons and ten years or so the senior of Manet. He based his art on the great Umbrian masters, having a special predilection for Piero della Francesca, and attacked problems which, left unsolved by them, had been untouched by others. He also took in hand the revival of the art of decorating great wall spaces, which had fallen to a very low level; after Tiepolo, no artist had grasped its fundamental principles, and even Tiepolo had his shortcomings—misunderstanding, for instance, the dictates of mural decoration as such and being too apt to emphasize local interest at the expense of the harmony of the whole composition. Puvis de Chavannes surpassed the Venetian in that he realized that this was fatal to first-class work; and he also recognized that any lapse in the general colour scheme or any disturbance of harmony caused by a lack of colour balance was no less fatal. In short he was a synthetist of no mean order. Blessed with a refined and sensitive temperament, almost immaculate draughtsmanship, full of reticence, an intuitive sense in composition, he emerged triumphant from an ordeal as severe as any painter of the nineteenth century had set himself. The wonderful decoration of the Pantheon and of the staircases of the museums of

Amiens, Lyons and Marseilles are masterpieces, which, in many ways, will bear comparison with those of the golden period of Italian art. That the decoration of the staircase of the public library of Boston was not equally successful was due, not to any inferiority of his work but to incongruous surroundings: had he realized the true nature of the position, there can be no doubt that his treatment would have been different.

Amongst his contemporaries was Arnold Böcklin, who was born at Basel in Switzerland in 1827, and after working at Munich, Weimar, Florence and Zurich, died at Munich in 1901, two years after Puvis de Chavannes. Böcklin was a conscientious worker, thoroughly imbued with the German attitude of his time towards pictorial art—an attitude which placed undue emphasis upon the classical tradition as the only legitimate stimulant in the exercise of art. With Böcklin this influence was manifested not so much in regard to the subjects he treated as in the attitude he assumed in treating them. There is a heaviness, a ponderousness in his art which militate against wholehearted infection. It is too literary in feeling and is devoid of that touch of light-hearted irresponsibility and elusiveness which is ever present in the best art. He is a typical instance

of the national as opposed to the international artist. As German in his artistic make-up as the Pre-Raphaelites were British, he painted for Germans and will perhaps always be appreciated by them.

Only two other painters need be mentioned : Hans Makart, who practised his art in Vienna, and the Hungarian Munkácsy. The former of these was, like Böcklin, a conscientious worker, but as an artist he was of no particular account ; the latter was merely theatrical and empty.

XXIII

The manner of approach to the different schools which has been suggested has disregarded all idea of chronology, and been based merely on the ground of utility. But a practical knowledge having been acquired, it will not be amiss to sum up what has been said from a different standpoint, a chronological note of the chief countries ; and here again emphasis must be laid on the point that no effort is made to include everything of interest or even of importance. Such an attempt would be a ludicrous striving after the impossible, something like a child crying for the moon. All that can be done is to indicate the road on which

the student should travel, leaving details to be filled in by himself.

In the history of art two small countries stand out with a prominence which compels the attention of the most heedless—Attica and Tuscany; what Attica was to the ancient world Tuscany, the old Etruria, has been to the modern. What place Athens held in regard to sculpture, that has Florence held in regard to painting. And what is absolutely true of Florence, is in a measure true of all northern and central Italy if we exclude Piedmont and the Genoese dominions. The influence of Italy on the art of western Europe has been immense, but Italy herself has been under no obligation to any other country, with the exception, perhaps, of the Netherlands: certainly not till recent times.

Modern Italian painting, it will be remembered, started in the thirteenth century with the breaking away from Byzantine influence. A beginning was made by Cimabue and carried on by his pupil Giotto, who has as much claim to be called a realist as anyone who has followed him; though from remarks one comes across, it might be thought that realism was unknown till the middle of the nineteenth, or by a particularly generous interpretation of terms, the middle of the seventeenth

century. A long line of illustrious painters succeeding Giotto culminated in Leonardo da Vinci, painter, sculptor, architect and engineer, and Michelangelo, who was not only painter, sculptor, architect and engineer but also a poet. These were giants, but they were by no means the only Florentines who excelled in more than one branch of art, or in art and science at the same time. The Florentines were the greatest of the Tuscans, but the Sienese shared their love of art though they worked on different lines and were much longer in breaking away from the dominance of Byzantium. The earliest Sienese to be noted is the great Duccio di Buoninsegna, a contemporary of Giotto ; the last of any note was Sassetta's pupil Lorenzo Vecchietta, in the latter half of the fifteenth century ; he was not only a painter, but also a sculptor and an architect.

The neighbouring Umbria also produced painters of note ; the earliest of any importance was at work in the fourteenth century. He, Alegretto Nuzi, who worked at Fabriano, developed under Florentine influence, as later did Niccola da Foligno, Luca Signorelli, Perugino and Raphael, the glory of the Umbrians and perhaps the most popular painter the world has ever known. The son of Giovanni Sanzio, himself a painter and a

poet, he was born at Urbino, in 1483, a fortnight before the death of Edward IV of England, and died in 1520, six years before Holbein was introduced to Sir Thomas More by Erasmus.

Ferrara, Parma, Milan, Verona, Bergamo, Venice, all produced painters of note, but as centres of painting they came chronologically long after the Tuscan and the Umbrians, and directly or indirectly on all of them the influence of Florence was manifest. The only one of these northern schools which had any influence outside Italy, or certainly the one among them whose influence outside Italy was predominant, was Venice, and the especial characteristic of Venetian painting was its gorgeous colouring. The scientific problems of perspective and foreshortening, the attention to drawing and form which had absorbed the Florentine did not appeal to the Venetian : he wanted colour, glorious decoration for the palaces which lined the grand canal, the palaces of princely traders whose desire was for magnificence, artistic magnificence be it said, not the vulgar and ostentatious sumptuousness of many a modern plutocrat. It must, however, never be forgotten that decoration was only one side of Venetian art. Alongside it were magnificent specimens of religious art which remain a joy for ever ; the works for example

of Giovanni Bellini in the academy of Venice, those of Tintoretto in the scuola di San Rocco, of Carpaccio in the scuola di San Giorgio, and of Titian in many a place. And not religious art only but portraiture, as witness the portrait of the doge Leonardo Loredan by Bellini in the National Gallery, and Titian's portrait of Charles V at Madrid—to mention but two of many well-known examples.

The story of Venetian painting from its first beginning under the Vivarinis and Bellinis, its progress under Crivelli, Giorgione, Cariani, Cima, Titian, Lotto, Paolo Veronese, Tintoretto and the rest in its golden period, to the days of decline and death under Tiepolo, Longhi, Guardi and Zuccarelli was indeed a glorious one.

And with the exception of a possible northern influence on the painting of Venice, all this Italian art was indigenous and free from foreign influence : how great its own influence was on other countries hardly needs emphasis, but as we proceed in this, summary reference will now and again be made to it.

For the moment, however, we will pass on to the Netherlands, whose art was, like that of Italy, indigenous. Here again we have a list of great painters of which any country might

be proud—the Van Eycks, Hugo van der Goes, Dierick Bouts, Roger van der Weyden, Petrus Christus, Hans Memlinc, Gerard David, Jan de Mabuse, Joachim Patinir will suffice to show what men the Netherlands produced before the religious and political changes of the sixteenth century. After this the provinces now known as Belgium produced Antonio Mor, Pourbus, Rubens, and Van Dyck—the last two of whom were profoundly influenced by the great Italian masters: whilst the provinces now known as Holland produced Frans Hals, Ruisdael, Rembrandt, Carl Fabritius, Vermeer, Steen and de Hooch—to make a selection of some well-known names from a lengthy list.

Like Italy, the Netherlands had a great influence on the art of other countries; and first of all possibly on that of Venice, for it is a matter of history that Antonello da Messina journeyed north to study the method of the Van Eycks; their influence and that of their followers certainly extended to Germany, to Spain, to Portugal and to France.

German painting, which too was of native origin, was already of importance at the end of the fourteenth century, when Meister Wilhelm of Cologne was a prominent figure, but nothing now in existence can be assigned to him with certainty. But there are several works in existence

of his successor Hermann Wynrich von Wesel, whose period of activity synchronized with the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV of England. After him came Stephen Lochner, and a number of painters who cannot be identified by name but are known by their works. One of these, the Master of St. Severin, so called from pictures painted by him in the church of St. Severin in Cologne, was probably a Netherlander. A pupil of his was the Master of the St. Ursula legend, one of whose paintings can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. After the last mentioned the school of Cologne became Italianized. Another German school, closely related to that of Cologne, was the Westphalian, to which belonged Konrad von Soest, who was working at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Among the Westphalian painters must too be mentioned the Master of Schöppingen, who was under the influence of the Master of Flémalle, a Netherlander: and the Master of Leisborn, whose painting also suggests Netherlandish influence. During the fifteenth century there were also flourishing schools at Nuremburg, Augsburg, Basel and Constance. Of the Nuremburg painters may be mentioned Berthold; the Master of the Tucher Altar; Michael Wolgemut; and, great-

est of all, Albert Dürer, whose work extended into the sixteenth century. Dürer visited Italy in 1494 and then studied the works of Mantegna, Antonio Pollaiuolo and Lorenzo di Credi; some ten years later he visited Venice for the second time and was courteously received by Giovanni Bellini, then an old man of seventy. He was probably also influenced by another Venetian, Jacopo de' Barbari, a pupil of Alvise Vivarini, who settled in Nuremburg. Dürer's mental activity, which found an outlet in the writing of books on measurement, on fortification and human proportion has been not inaptly compared with that of Leonardo. He was, too, not only a painter but also an engraver. He was a great master of technique: but he indulged in complexity of composition, by the introduction of great detail, which militates against unity of effect.

Contemporaries of Dürer, who long survived him, were the two Cranachs and Hans Baldung; and a quarter of a century after Dürer, Hans Holbein the younger was born. His works are more widely distributed than Dürer's.

In France, Jehan Fouquet and Simon Marmion were at work in the fifteenth century; the Clouets and Corneille de Lyon in the sixteenth. During its early period, French art was under the influence

of the Low Countries ; Netherlandish painters at work in Burgundy developing what native talent there was to be developed. In the sixteenth century it owed not a little to Holbein, who greatly influenced the portrait painters the Clouets and Corneille de Lyon. In the seventeenth the Poussins, Philippe de Champagne, Le Sueur and Rigaud stand out ; of these Nicholas Poussin was by far the greatest, as will have been already appreciated, and it will be remembered that he was Italian trained. With these seventeenth century artists, Claude Gellée is generally associated ; he being regarded as one of the glories of the French school. But this great artist was not a Frenchman and there is no reason for thinking that he ever worked in the France of his day. Claude was a native of the ancient duchy of Lorraine, which preserved its independence till 1736—fifty-four years after Claude's death—and a nominal independence for another thirty years. It was only in 1766 that Lorraine became French ; though it must not be forgotten that from the early part of the sixteenth century it was greatly influenced by French thought and habits and that this influence was constantly increasing.

The eighteenth century produced Watteau, Lancret, Boucher, and Fragonard. The nine-

teenth Delacroix, Corot, Millet and the other men of the 1830 school, who were inspired by the English landscape painters: Courbet, Manet, Monet and the early impressionists, who were inspired in a measure by Turner; the neo-impressionists who reduced painting to a science, the working out of mathematical problems; the post-impressionists who threw off the technique of their predecessors and began again as children, or as savages newly emerged from barbarism; and the cubists, some of whom are mathematical, and some of them unintelligible. In short, French art during the nineteenth century has been a series of revolutions. Classicism held the field when the century came in; romanticism deposed it from its pedestal; the realists, from whom developed the impressionists, attacked the romantic citadel and were treated contumeliously by officialdom, just as they themselves later treated the post-impressionists who attacked their position and their principles. It is too near the time to pass a satisfactory judgment on these successive movements.

In Spain, Bermejo appears in the fifteenth century; and in the sixteenth we have Morales and Ribera. The former of these was born in 1509: his earliest work shows Flemish and his later Italian influence. Two years after his death,

Ribera was born near Valencia : he worked in Naples, where he was known as *Lo Spagnoletto*. Ten years junior to Ribera was Zurbaran, who was born in Estremadura but studied in Seville ; he was a realist in presentment and a prolific painter. Contemporary with him was the great Velasquez, a Sevillian by birth, but the grandson of a Portuguese who migrated to Andalusia from Oporto ; enough has already been said in another place of this illustrious painter whose influence has been far-reaching.

A pupil of Velasquez, Mazo, was a Madrideno who painted portraits and landscapes so completely in the style of his master that there is but little doubt that some of the portraits ascribed to the latter were really his work—for example the portrait of Admiral Pulido-Pareja in the National Gallery is almost certainly from his hand.

A few years junior to Mazo was Murillo, perhaps the most popular of the Spanish painters. Like Velasquez he was a native of Seville and there his chief work was done and remains : he was a painter of portraits and of subjects, religious and other. The latter abound, but his portraits are at present held in higher estimation. Another Sevillian was Francisco de Herrera the younger, who was born five years after Murillo. He first

worked with his father ; then went to Rome ; returned to Seville in 1656 ; and four years later went to Madrid, where he was appointed painter to Philip IV. His early work consisted of still-life pictures, but afterwards he did frescoes and altarpieces. Valdes Leal, another Andalusian, was born at Cordova, a few years after Herrera. His chief works are in Seville. One, however, the portrait of a Franciscan who appears to have been an official of the inquisition, is in the possession of Sir Herbert Cook.

Only one other Spanish painter need be mentioned, Francesco Goya, an Aragonese, who has already been dealt with. Domenico Theotocopouli, El Greco, however, must not be overlooked, for though a Cretan he lived so long in Toledo that he is identified with Spain : but of him too enough has been already said.

And now a word in conclusion about the British painters. The earliest of them are portrait painters, the sixteenth century John Bettes and the seventeenth century William Dobson ; with whom may be mentioned Cornelius Johnson, commonly known as Janssen Van Ceulen, a Dutchman, who was born in London, where he worked in the early part of his life, though, after the arrival of Van Dyck he migrated from the capital, first to Kent

and later to Holland. Lely, who worked in England from 1641, was a Dutchman; his art was meretricious and showy although his influence on subsequent painters was great. Among those who worked in the eighteenth century were Thornhill, Hogarth, Wilson, Ramsay, Romney, Beechey, Opie, Morland and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy. Reynolds was chiefly a portrait painter: the same might be said of his contemporary Thomas Gainsborough if numbers only were considered, for he painted some nine hundred pictures, of which seven hundred were portraits, but he himself said that he was a portrait painter by profession and a landscape painter by choice. Raeburn and Lawrence may also be mentioned as portrait painters—both of them working well into the nineteenth century.

Alexander Nasmyth and Patrick his son were landscape painters, and it is in landscape painting that the British have excelled. Crome, one of the greatest of them, was born in 1768 and worked till 1821; Constable was born eight years later and died in 1837; Turner was born in 1775 and lived till 1851. It is unnecessary to say more about them here, beyond again calling attention to the great influence of the last two on French

art—Constable on the Barbizon school. Turner on the impressionists. Seven years junior to Turner came Cotman, and a year after Cotman, David Cox was born ; these were both landscape painters, as was Bonington, who died in 1828 at the age of twenty-six. Apart from the landscapists the most important English group in the nineteenth century was the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. Of the rest, some are too near to be fairly judged ; of others the less said the better.

EPILOGUE

AN attempt has now been made first to suggest how latent æsthetic emotion may be stimulated, and secondly to show how the different schools of painting may be approached upon the line of least resistance: if these suggestions have proved helpful the way has been paved for the appreciation of art in all its varied aspects, for a thorough knowledge and appreciation of painting can hardly fail to carry with it a capacity for the enjoyment of every other form of art. It may be advisable to reiterate that no attempt has been made to write a history of painting: many great masters have been dismissed in a few lines or with a mere mention, others remain unnoticed whilst considerable space has been devoted to relatively unimportant men simply because they facilitate the desired approach to some phase of painting.

The whole has perforce been coloured by my own particular views and sympathies, none of which need the reader accept; he will form his own

judgements, and the fact that he disagrees with me will be a sign of healthy development. The method adopted, disregarding chronological order, will it is hoped have made such apparently difficult manifestations as the primitives and the impressionists easy of approach.

There are two other branches of art, the study of which materially help to a full understanding of painting, with which they are intimately bound up—etching and drawing. A number of the great masters employed the etching needle with success, and in their etchings have put forth some of their most painter-like qualities. Rembrandt and Van Dyck, Claude and Ruisdael, Ostade and Millet may be cited as examples: and acquaintance with their work in this medium is of material assistance in the study of their paintings.

Again, at an early stage, attention should be devoted to original drawings. Morelli writes:—

Above all, I recommend to students the study of drawings by great masters; their painted works have come down to us in most cases so disfigured by the tooth of time or the paw of the restorer, that very often we can no longer recognize in them the hand and mind of the artist. In their drawings, on the contrary, the whole man stands before us without disguise or affectation, and his genius with its beauties and its failings speaks directly to the mind. But the study of drawings is not only indispensable to our knowledge of the different masters; it also serves to impress more sharply on

our minds the distinguishing characteristics of the several schools. Much more clearly than in paintings, we recognize in drawings the family features, both intellectual and material of the different masters and schools; for instance, their manner of arranging drapery, their way of indicating light and shadow, the preference they give to pen and ink, or to black or red chalk, etc.¹

As to the soundness of his advice no one, competent to judge, can have a doubt.

Reference was made in the introduction to the great output of books on minor and unimportant painters which has been a characteristic of the last decade. To these artists an importance is attributed which is quite out of proportion to their merit, and which tends to upset the balance of judgement. Care must be taken lest a painter who makes a particular and personal appeal should warp our judgement in regard to those who are his superiors; in other words a personal predilection for one master or for one school should not be allowed to destroy our sense of proportion—a sense which helps us to withstand the baneful influence of superlative terms applied to emotionally insignificant craftsmen. It may be retorted that I myself have placed an undue value upon

¹ Morelli, *Italian Masters in German Galleries*, translated by L. M. Richter, London, 1883, p. 7.

certain masters—Crome, for example ; and perhaps if absolute proportion were rigorously insisted upon this retort would be just. Crome, in fact, played a considerable part in my development, for my intimate acquaintance and sympathy with Norfolk scenery rendered me particularly susceptible to his appeal, the essence of which lies in his responsiveness to the peculiar charm of his native county. It is, however, the universality of his appeal which constitutes his right to a foremost rank amongst the world's landscape painters ; though, with the exception of the magnificent " Slate Quarries " in the National Gallery, I know of no work based upon a scene outside Norfolk which would entitle him to the rank he so justly holds. And this one would expect, for the keenest emotions of the landscape painter are generally aroused by fidelity to certain districts which especially appeal to him : for instance, Constable's devotion to the valley of his native Stour and the neighbourhood of Hampstead.

And here perhaps I may be pardoned a digression if I point out that majestic scenery has very rarely inspired great landscape painters. Titian with the mountains of Cadore and Turner in the Alps may certainly be cited in favour of such

inspiration : but among many others Constable in Cumberland, and Rousseau in Auvergne witness to the truth of the assertion. In fact flat countries, such as Holland and East Anglia, have produced the greatest landscape painters : and in this connexion it is worthy of note, that little art of any form has been produced by mountaineers.

Here we might end ; but there are certain subjects so closely connected with those which have occupied our attention that it is hardly possible to exclude some reference to them—contemporary art, criticism, public galleries.

Millais once said epigrammatically that two of the greatest old masters were Father Time and mastic varnish, which suggests that in his opinion the fame of some at any rate of the ancients was not due entirely to the intrinsic merit of their work. On the other hand Reynolds urged that “ the works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend.”

Much might be said in support of either view. One thing is certain, that it is easier to be sure about the quality of the art of the past than about that of contemporary art ; in regard to the latter we lack the *recul* necessary for right judg-

ment. It not infrequently happens that an artist who is despised and derided by his contemporaries becomes a classic with succeeding generations, and that men who were lauded during their lifetime were almost forgotten a few years after death. Greater discrimination is needed for the purchase of modern than of old works of art, and those who are possessed of this quality may often do something which is not only worthy of a real lover of art, but at the same time distinctly advantageous to themselves: the possession of a fine Renoir should give greater and more legitimate pleasure than that of an inferior Rembrandt. And those who are unable to pay the enormous prices demanded for fine examples of the old masters can see them in the great galleries; and they can console themselves for their inability to purchase by the knowledge that the works which only fairly wealthy people are able to acquire to-day, when judged from a purely artistic standpoint, often fall below the works of the best modern artists. And from this it follows that one of the minor and legitimate joys which spring from a fuller appreciation, is the knowledge that a long purse is not essential to the surrounding of oneself with true works of art. And then, there should be felt great satisfaction in the knowledge

that one has helped, in however small a way, to keep alive the sacred tradition.

The attitude maintained by even enlightened connoisseurs towards the art of their contemporaries is not infrequently justly resented by artists themselves: and this is nothing new. Hogarth satirized the taste of his day by the pictures he painted on the walls of his interiors: and he was stimulated to paint the well-known "Sigismonda mourning over the heart of Guiscardo," now in the National Gallery, merely to show how far he could surpass the achievements of some of the old masters who were eagerly sought after. Turner was probably stung by a remark of Sir George Beaumont, comparing him unfavourably with Claude, into leaving his "Sun Rising in a Mist" and "Dido building Carthage" to be hung for ever in the National Gallery alongside the "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" and the "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca."

There may be something strange about the productions of one's own time, something one does not quite understand. In that case it must be borne in mind that a new form of art manifestation may be only comprehensible to a discerning few; who, however, if real merit is present, by their enthusiastic and insistent propaganda will

probably succeed in convincing others, till in time the general public falls into line.

As to criticism—modern criticism may be broadly said to be of two kinds : one dealing with questions of attribution, the other with æsthetics. The first, in its present form, is essentially a product of the nineteenth century and more especially of its closing years, during which the attribution of practically every important picture has been drastically looked into. The initial spade-work was done by such men as Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and Waagen, but its later and more important development must be credited to Giovanni Morelli. After an exhaustive study of the Italian painters, he became convinced that each master had some idiosyncrasies peculiar to himself, and he found from the treatment of such details as nostrils, mouth, eyelid, finger-nails, invaluable clues to the painter of a work. For example, he discovered that the drawing of the ear was the same in all of Lorenzo Costa's pictures.

Morelli further divided works belonging to one " family " into three classes. First, those in which all the peculiarities of the master were present, as well as the emotional qualities which we look for in his work—these he considered as being indubitably from his hand. Next, works which

presented some of his technical characteristics, together with his forms and types but in which the power of infection which a genuine work of his should possess, was missing ; these he classed as simply works from his cartoons, executed probably in his workshop. Lastly, examples which, whilst bearing a certain family likeness to his genuine productions, lacked his technical peculiarities and the higher attributes of conception and design which would be looked for ; verdict, not authentic, probably the work of pupils or imitators.

It will be at once grasped that, with such a system, criticism was established upon a more scientific basis than had hitherto been the case. Morelli possessed in a high degree the qualities necessary for a successful pursuit of his system : he possessed acumen and tenacity of purpose and he was indefatigable in collecting facts. But he did not possess in a marked degree those higher qualities of emotional responsiveness which are indispensable for a final judgement. Some of the attributions in the collection he left to his native Bergamo have been justly assailed, largely on æsthetic grounds ; and the fact that he bequeathed his portrait by such a mediocrity as Lenbach to be hung with his collection is damaging evidence

of his lack of æsthetic perception and feeling. Although an Italian, his first work was published in German, he posing as a Russian traveller interested in Italian art ; in this he expressed diffident surprise at many of the current attributions, at the same time stating his reasons, which, backed as they were by solid evidence and reasoning, attracted wide attention. In his masterly work, *Italian Masters in German Galleries*, he carried his method to its logical conclusion : and the result of the investigation started by him has been the overhauling of attributions in every European gallery.

Morelli insisted that documentary evidence, however strong, was insufficient by itself to substantiate the authenticity of a work, for a copy might have been fraudulently substituted for the original : I have myself come across a Dutch picture purporting to be by a great *seventeenth-century* master, and possessed of an immaculate pedigree, which was painted on *eighteenth-century* French canvas ! Morelli held that we must look to the internal evidence of the work for proofs of its authenticity ; if these are present, then corroborative documentary evidence makes its position irrefutable, but documents must always be subservient to internal evidence. His prin-

ciples have been generally accepted, and it is indeed impossible to estimate the debt we owe to him ; though, as with everything in this world, there is something to be said on the other side.

His method involves the search for certain technical details, and an appreciation of the emotional value of the picture, and his influence has not been wholly beneficent from the fact that the door is now opened wide to those who, though emotionally impotent, possess a detective-like capacity for discovering peculiarities of detail with which to build some really insupportable theory, by which much has been done to bring about the neglect of the infinitely more important matter of æsthetic criticism.

Morelli's principles, too, have been pushed by some to undue lengths ; a work which does not present all the peculiarities of some particular master in the most characteristic form stands but little chance of being accepted. It is difficult to get them to sponsor anything which does not fit into the stereotyped mould.

Criticism, of course, is necessary, in order that we may be as certain as possible that a work upon which is founded an estimate of a master's æsthetic worth, is actually a product of his brush.

A great difficulty in regard to the authenticity

of an old master is the fact that painters have from time to time copied, and not always slavishly, the works of their predecessors. In the Dresden Gallery the work of one of its eighteenth-century directors, Christian Dietrich, is well represented, and Dietrich painted in imitation of masters as widely divergent in outlook and handling as Rembrandt, Ostade and Watteau, and did it so perfectly that they have at times deceived experts. So Gainsborough copied Van Dyck ; Delacroix, Rubens ; Ricci, Veronese ; Domenichino, Titian ; Caravaggio, Giorgione ; and, as has already been said, Luca Giordano copied not only all the Venetians but also Velasquez. Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely.

Another difficulty is suggested by the fact that contemporary records show that there were some thousands of painters at work in Holland during the seventeenth century, of whom we know the names of between five and six hundred. Such works of the unknown as may have survived have probably (disquieting thought !) been ascribed to other and better-known men.

The task of overhauling attributions must be well-nigh complete, and the hope may be expressed that æsthetic considerations will receive more attention than has been the case in the past.

One may, too, perhaps, venture to hope that the attention of discriminating connoisseurs may be directed rather to the masterpieces of modern art than to that mass of work whose virtue lies mainly in its antiquity.

Constant revision of judgment is necessary to every one; to the critic most of all. This will certainly be appreciated by those who have had the good fortune to visit the Prado Museum in Madrid. Probably most will agree that they first went there primarily to make acquaintance with Velasquez. What is found does not, as a rule, fall short of expectation; arranged in one well-lighted gallery are the majority of his works, which absorb all interest for the first few visits. But one day, the works of Goya are discovered and the spontaneity of the best of these compels a revision of the estimate of Velasquez himself, whilst the poorer of them raise a doubt as to their even being the work of Goya: it will *then* be realized how unequal a great artist can be. Perhaps when this shock has been recovered from, the visitor will be compelled, by the claims of Titian's great portrait of Charles V, to revise his judgement with regard to all three painters. Facts such as these should induce reflection upon the nature of criticism and our attitude in regard to it.

In conclusion some reference must be made to the galleries on which the student has to rely for much of his education ; some belonging to the nation, others to various municipalities.

The former class are, in Great Britain and Ireland, each of them under the control of a director and a board of trustees. The trustees are appointed by the Government, and it must be assumed that appointments are made solely from the point of view of the appointee's capacity for safeguarding and developing the artistic education of the nation ; which, of course, presupposes not only æsthetic perception but a knowledge of the relative importance of different schools and of different painters. These qualifications are of vital importance, for the trustees have the power of the purse, and can veto any purchase the director proposes to make. Given the proper men, the system has much in its favour ; such a body is usually ultra-conservative and the Government can ask Parliament for a grant with confidence that it will be spent judiciously—an important point, for an injudicious purchase rouses criticism from which the Treasury is not immune. Were purchases made by the director alone, there cannot be much doubt that criticism would be free and more hostile, personal enmity and envy would

play their part, and the Government, being unable to judge for itself, would perhaps withhold grants altogether. A unanimous board of trustees is a good buffer between the director and potential critics ; criticism is less likely to hit when directed against a united body of persons, than it is when directed against an individual, however capable he may be.

But it can hardly be doubted that with a director at once talented, of wide knowledge and experience, and emotionally responsive to the appeal of great art, even better and greater results might be looked for by giving him an unfettered hand ; just as it has been said that the best form of state government is an autocracy—if you can find the proper sort of autocrat. One of the great dangers of government by trustees lies in their ultra-conservatism.

In regard to municipal galleries, the situation is far worse than it is in those belonging to the State. If the mode of appointing trustees for, say, the National Gallery is not beyond the reach of criticism, what can be said of that which prevails in the provinces, where the power not only of purchase but even of appointing the director is in the hands of the local “ Bumbles,” an “ art-committee ” nominated by the corporation ? Fear of the

ratepayer is ever before their eyes ; consequently not only is the salary offered to the director usually inadequate to secure the services of a competent man, but even the purchase of pictures may be a difficulty. In the prefatory note to the catalogue of one of the large provincial galleries, the gallery of one of our wealthiest cities, it is stated that "the committee is not enabled to make any purchases at the expense of the ratepayers." This means that additions can only be made by the gifts of living persons or the bequests of the dead ; and it may be said that in either case one desirable addition may be accompanied by half a dozen others whose presence on the walls would damn any collection. In the case of a bequest, the option may be to "take all or none" ; in which case, if there should be any one on the committee sufficiently intelligent to suggest the refusal of the lot he would certainly be outvoted, for quantity not quality counts.

The obvious remedy is to appoint a capable and understanding person to purchase and organize. How much might thus be done for education and what waste would be avoided ! A competent director, and there are a few of them, not only expends the allotted money worthily ; he arranges, hangs and frames the pictures in his collection

artistically, and, what is of far greater importance, he eliminates the rubbish. Further, he organizes loan exhibitions and issues an explanatory catalogue in connexion with each one ; moreover, he either gives or arranges for lectures on the chief works exhibited, trying thereby to compel the attention of the townsfolk, leading them on to take a real interest in their gallery. Another important point is that a director should be given facilities for frequent travel. He should visit important exhibitions wherever they are held at home or abroad, at the expense of his employers, in order that he may acquaint the townspeople with the various movements in art and the current opinion with regard to them.

The excellent administration of a local library not far from London, that of the county borough of Croydon, shows what can be done by well-directed energy ; and there is no reason why equally good results should not be obtained in every library in the kingdom, and if in every library, then also in every museum and picture gallery. But as things are, to provincial townsfolk, their gallery is generally merely a place where local curiosities are housed, in which a wet afternoon may be whiled away.

Generally speaking, the best of directors has

but a poor chance ; he gets into the way of considering the desirability of possessing any given picture, not from the point of view of artistic merit but from that of its probable popularity. And it is impossible to overlook the personal inducement so to act ; his position might be jeopardized by frequent purchases of artistically great but popularly unappreciated pictures. It is not really difficult to understand why provincial galleries are filled with sentimental rubbish—gilt frames with pictures in them, as Thackeray puts it ; the sort of rubbish referred to by Mr. C. J. Holmes, when he advises the readers of his little book on pictures and picture collecting to “leave the buying of sentimental pictures to those who buy for public collections.” And it is useless to look for any improvement till the men who control these galleries recognize that the appreciation of art is at least as highly specialized a matter as the conduct of their own businesses.

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